

Tang Sect 151

Volume 17, Chapter 151.1 Extreme Teaching

This teacher was fine and slim, and had the allure of a female. However, he was bearded with a face full of facial hair. His appearance was a little glaring and shocking to the eyes.

Xian Lin'er said, "Let me introduce to the two of you. This is teacher Gao Sheng, and he's responsible for guiding you guys in the art of makeup and the art of concealment. Learn from him."

He Caitou mumbled pitifully, "Dean Xian, are you letting us rest for a little while before we continue our lessons? We will be more efficient that way. We have consumed too much soul power."

Xian Lin'er snapped, "This will be the last time I hear you whine. Every minute that you have is precious. You don't need soul power to learn the art of makeup and the art of concealment. You will naturally recover your energy and your soul power during the process. Begin, teacher Gao. Fan Yu, you will stay here to monitor them. If they slack off even a little bit – hmph!"

Gao Sheng walked elegantly before the two of them and made the gesture of a cymbidium with his right hand. He said softly, "My two students, you will learn the art of makeup and concealment from me for one full year, starting today. Oh, yes. Huo Yuhao will spend a little less time learning the art of makeup. You will attend four lessons for about a month, and all you have to do is understand a little bit. However, you have to learn the complete art of concealment."

This teacher's fine and soft voice gave Huo Yuhao and He Caitou goosebumps. They would rather face swarms of soul beasts than listen to Teacher Gao speak.

Fan Yu's facial muscles were also faintly twitching not far away from them. If he wasn't aware that teacher Gao was especially adept with the art of makeup and concealment, he probably would have slapped him right across the face. Xian Lin'er and Qian Duoduo were already gone by this time.

Gao Sheng giggled femininely, and suddenly spun around. When he turned back, both He Caitou and Huo Yuhao felt their eyes brighten. The enormous beard on Gao Sheng's face was gone, and a pretty and exquisite face appeared before the two of them – this look was more compatible with his feminine and elegant frame.

Gao Sheng patted his chest with both hands. Huo Yuhao and He Caitou watched with widened eyes and slack jaws as two supple, firm and round humps suddenly protruded from Gao Sheng's originally flat chest. The humps even looked a little elastic and bouncy.

He raised his butt, and his originally flat buttocks suddenly became a lot bigger than before. His hips gradually lifted upwards, and when juxtaposed with the two perky humps that had appeared on his chest before, he transformed into a perfect body.

"How's that? It's magical, isn't it?"

Gao Sheng spoke again just as Huo Yuhao and He Caitou were immersed in the incredible transformations that were happening before their eyes, and he frightened these little fellas once more. His initial feminine and giggly voice actually became a deep male baritone. The pairing of this voice with

his alluring and sexy build made Huo Yuhao feel like even his heart was starting to twist into knots. However, he had to admit that teacher Gao Sheng had left an extremely strong impression in his mind.

Gao Sheng smiled and said, "Making a male into a female, and without any loopholes at all. This is an extremely high level. At its peak, the art of makeup can transform a person into anything – sometimes you can even transform into a soul beast and not have your cover blown. I will impart some tips and tricks to you today. For example, how to increase my bust like I just did."

"....."

Fan Yu sprang to his feet and said, "I'm going to get some fresh air, Teacher Gao." With that, he immediately turned around and walked out without a single moment of hesitation.

Gao Sheng's smile was very terrifying to Huo Yuhao and He Caitou.

Gao Sheng tortured Huo Yuhao and He Caitou all the way until lunchtime. When the two of them walked out from the Testing Area, even their eyes had become a little lackadaisical.

Teacher Gao's pedagogy couldn't just be described as extraordinary. From the beginning to the end, they had no idea which voice was Teacher Gao's actual voice, and they weren't sure what Teacher Gao's real appearance was like.

Gao Sheng displayed the magic of the art of makeup to them over the span of more than an hour. Gao Sheng's appearance changed eleven times during the process, and every transformation was drastic, and with incredible speed and agility.

The art of concealment was to be learned together with the art of makeup. Both Huo Yuhao and He Caitou were stuffed with voluminous knowledge and information even though this was only one lesson. Teacher Gao adjusted their bodies and enabled them to truly experience what it felt like to transform... Gao Sheng only conducted one lesson every week, but he told them that he would conduct an assessment based on this lesson's teachings. If they couldn't pass his assessment, then he would transform into his original elegant frame with a bearded face, and he would hug them while taking a stroll around Shrek Plaza... and it would be the look with a perky chest and buttocks, with a face full of facial hair... Huo Yuhao and He Caitou reoriented themselves only after they finished lunch. Fan Yu told them that they would have thirty minutes to rest and digest what they had learned in the morning. Fan Yu would take over for the subsequent lesson in the afternoon, and this lesson would be about the forging and designing of soul tools that were considered imperative for soul engineers.

The speed of imparting knowledge was clearly a lot faster than before, especially for Huo Yuhao. Fan Yu couldn't be bothered with the two-year gap between Huo Yuhao and He Caitou during his afternoon lesson, and started his lesson directly from Class 3 soul tools. All sorts of information and knowledge that was comparable in volume to the art of makeup that they had encountered for the first time in the morning was shoved into their heads.

After the day was over, Huo Yuhao's mind was turbid and in a complete mess even though he was a spirit-type soul master. He had learned too many things, and they would have a hands-on lesson in forging soul tools tomorrow, along with multiple other lessons. The fatigue in his mind was even more agonizing than the physical exhaustion. When they were brought to the canteen that was specially

prepared for them in the Soul Tool Department, the two of them felt as if they could crumble and collapse at any time.

However, they were pleasantly surprised – dinner was sumptuous and wholesome!

Dinner filled up a large table, and was prepared just for the two of them. They had never seen most of the glittering and dazzling foods on the table, and the fragrant smell of food triggered their voracious appetites.

However, their excitement was short-lived, and disappeared very soon. A teacher that was responsible for their diet arrived beside them and started teaching them how to eat.

Yes, teaching them how to eat!

Did eating require guidance?! This was the first thought that appeared in Huo Yuhao and He Caitou's minds. The person before them seemed around thirty years old, and she wore a white chef's hat on her head while a clean white gown draped from her body – this extremely pretty middle-aged lady gave them the answer.

“The foods you see before you aren't normal – I have specially selected them. Oh, yes, let me introduce myself. My name is Lu Xiaoxiao, and I am the number one nutritionist in the academy. I specialize in the various combinations and compatibilities of exotic foods and ingredients. Many different precious ingredients have to be used at different maturities, and you have to follow a specific order if you use several top-tier ingredients at the same time. Otherwise, their nutritious value will be affected. I will be responsible for your dinners from today onwards, and you will follow my guidance strictly when you eat. You can consider this a co-curricular lesson. I don't require you to learn everything, but you must at least learn to discern and distinguish.”

“Pick up the teacup in front of you. This is produced from the Spiritcharm Sea Urchin found in the Dou Ling Empire's East Coast, and it's a very special seafood. In order to preserve its taste and the rest of its nutrition, we have expended much energy and effort to transport it as fast as possible through the ocean. Finish it immediately with a spoon. This is your first dish, and I will explain its effects and nutrition while you guys eat.”

Huo Yuhao lifted the teacup before him and opened it. A dense fishy smell immediately wafted into his face. How would he describe it? The smell was like a macerated and stinky salted fish that was left to fester in a hot and humid environment for at least ten days.

He Caitou's originally tanned skin seemed to grow pale in an instant. Huo Yuhao exclaimed in shock, “How is this thing still moving?!”

Lu Xiaoxiao rolled her eyes and said, “Of course it's still moving, dumbass. Didn't I just say that we have to preserve its original nutrients by keeping it fresh? Therefore, we have to eat it raw. If we eat it after killing it, its nutrients will be damaged and tainted. This is a rare top-tier food that can nourish the soul. Every single one is incredibly pricey, and it's extremely difficult to come across even a single one. If it weren't for the academy's requirements, do you really think I could bear to let you guys eat it? If this were sold in the big cities, or even within Shrek City, a single one could fetch thousands of golden soul coins. You will experience its mystical effects once you consume it. Hurry up, don't wait for it to die.”

That smell... eating it alive... this... Huo Yuhao felt his stomach starting to churn vigorously, and his face turned ghastly pale.

Lu Xiaoxiao's expression turned cold when she saw that the two of them didn't move a single inch. She snapped the fingers of her right hand. Huo Yuhao and He Caitou both saw that this "number one nutritionist" in the academy, teacher Lu, seemed to have eight soul rings, which flickered once before the two of them realized they were immobilized – as if the entire space around them had been frozen and arrested.

Lu Xiaoxiao casually came before the two of them and picked up a spoon from the table before she grabbed He Caitou's chin and forced his mouth open. Then, she picked up the teacup and used the spoon to scoop out the thing inside...

It was a green sticky ball, and nothing seemed to be left inside the teacup once she scooped it out. It looked like a giant ball of snot... and it was squirming.

Lu Xiaoxiao moved incredibly quickly. She raised her wrist and stuffed this ball of snot into He Caitou's mouth, and He Caitou immediately felt as if his entire mouth was filled up. That sticky, moist, slimy, and stinky "snot" suddenly started to squirm vigorously.

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Lu Xiaoxiao lifted her wrist and pressed He Caitou's jaws together. The "snot" was swallowed just like that, with a gurgle.

He Caitou's face went from black to white, from white to green, and then from green to purple, and then... he fainted.

A day's worth of taxing lessons had already made him both mentally and physically exhausted. He couldn't take this torturous experience, and his body reacted naturally—he just collapsed onto the ground.

Lu Xiaoxiao frowned and grumbled, "Useless."

She snapped her fingers again as she spoke, and Huo Yuhao regained his ability to move. He was infuriated and blurted out, "You should try it yourself! This isn't something for humans to eat!" He was just about to toss the teacup away as he raged.

Lu Xiaoxiao raised her wrist and caught Huo Yuhao's hand, and she muttered coldly, "I really do want to try, but I can't. The Spiritcharm Sea Urchin truly doesn't taste nice at all, but good medicine always tastes bitter. You think the academy is trying to poison you by allowing me to set a dinner table for you guys? The academy has expended so many resources on you two, but you two are just going to crumble from something that tastes bad? So much for the being the academy's 'gifted elites'. I won't force you to eat—if you don't eat it, then scam. However, don't count on me to select foods for you anymore. You have two choices: eat the Spiritcharm Sea Urchin, or throw it at my face. I am giving you this opportunity."

Lu Xiaoxiao let him go as she spoke and took a step back.

Huo Yuhao glanced at the teacup in his hands, and then at the ice-cold but composed Lu Xiaoxiao. He took a deep breath and decisively raised the teacup to his mouth, used the spoon to scoop the thing inside into his mouth, and swallowed forcefully.

He suddenly felt as if there was an inexplicably terrifying smell that coursed over his entire body in an instant. All the sweat glands on his body seemed to open, and the unearthly sensations stimulated his body until he started to shiver and quiver involuntarily. He gritted his teeth and forcibly resisted that disgusting and revolting feeling that made him feel like even throwing up a hundred times was insufficient.

This shuddering lasted for almost twenty seconds. Then the repugnant sensations were suddenly gone, and a breeze of cold air rushed through his brain.

He had originally felt as drowsy and exhausted as could be, but now his brain felt as if it had suddenly been splashed by a bucket of cold water, and he shivered from the chilly sensation. Huo Yuhao immediately felt as if vitality and clarity had returned to his body, and his senses were fresh once again. His spirit felt smooth, and all the abhorrent emotions became a lot better than before. Furthermore, he realized that his second mental sea's spiritual power recovered at a much higher speed than before, and the exhaustion in his mind was alleviated to an incredibly large extent.

"I'm sorry, Teacher Lu. I was wrong." Huo Yuhao bowed respectfully toward Lu Xiaoxiao. This wasn't just because of the Spiritcharm Sea Urchin's magical effects—it was also because of what Lu Xiaoxiao had said to him before that.

The academy had given so much for them, and he couldn't take this trivial distress? If that was the case, were they still worth the academy's attention and resources?

Lu Xiaoxiao woke up He Caitou, who immediately felt the changes happening in his body. The revolting sensations had long since disappeared during his brief bout of unconsciousness.

"The second dish—the Peony Lobster. This dish is best eaten when still raw. However, it can also be eaten after killing it, so eating it alive isn't necessary. I will prepare it, and you guys will consume it immediately."

Lu Xiaoxiao opened two golden covers as she spoke, and both white porcelain plates had a lobster that was about as long as a palm. They were still struggling and moving around, but some unknown force was restricting them, and they couldn't leave the plate.

A small and nimble silver dinner knife suddenly appeared in Lu Xiaoxiao's hands—and then, Huo Yuhao and He Caitou witnessed a brutal sight.

From their perspectives, the two living lobsters looked like they were shedding their own shells, and their bodies swiftly broke apart into pieces, before piece after piece of thin lobster meat landed on the meal plates before Huo Yuhao and He Caitou.

"Eat them right away. You will feel the magical effects of this exquisite delicacy."

Huo Yuhao had learned his lesson. He didn't hesitate at all as he immediately impaled a piece of meat using his fork and placed it in his mouth.

The thin lobster meat was pink in color, and its appearance had an inexplicable allure to it. The meat melted in his mouth, and was converted into a clear and sweet juice that carried the fresh tastiness of seafood as it slid into his stomach.

If the Spiritcharm Sea Urchin was diabolically destructive to his taste buds, then the Peony Lobster was a miracle from the heavens. A warm feeling flowed through his body from his innards as the lobster meat entered his stomach. His pores opened once again, but this was a smooth and comfortable release, as if his entire day's exhaustion and fatigue were swiftly receding.

He Caitou hesitated a bit more compared to Huo Yuhao, but he ate his food too in the end. The two of them started to enjoy their dish, and didn't seem like they were getting tired of it. The two Peony Lobsters suddenly became part of their nutrients in the blink of an eye.

"The Spiritcharm Sea Urchin is only produced in a tiny patch of ocean within the Dou Ling Empire's East Coast, and it's not considered a soul beast. However, it's a delicacy that's coveted by all soul beasts. Soul beasts can unlock their intelligence and be inspired after eating it, and cultivating will become a lot smoother and more efficient. Legend has it that if a soul beast can eat a hundred Spiritcharm Sea Urchins, this soul beast will easily possess the intelligence of a ten thousand year soul beast. For human soul masters, Spiritcharm Sea Urchins can nourish our souls and increase our ability to absorb and understand. Simply put, it boosts your spiritual power and helps you to resist spiritual fatigue so that you can work harder."

"In comparison, the Peony Lobster got its name because its fresh red tail is beautiful when it opens, and looks like the peony flower. Even though it's also a top-tier ingredient, it's actual value is nothing compared to the Spiritcharm Sea Urchin. It contains clean and enriching nutrients, and can be absorbed directly. It helps with restoring your physical strength, and also refines and boosts your physique. You guys should be able to eat one every day from now on, but I only have ten Spiritcharm Sea Urchins left in storage, so we'll see if you guys get lucky."

The two Peony Lobsters were gobbled down just as Lu Xiaoxiao finished her explanation. Huo Yuhao and He Caitou looked up from their plates with astonishment—both Peony Lobsters were suddenly whole again. They had devoured the lobster meat, but the shell had been pieced back together, as if the lobsters were still alive. The shell was just sitting there in the center of the plate, vivid and lifelike. This teacher Lu was obviously a perfectionist!

"The third dish..."

The subsequent dishes gradually became Huo Yuhao and He Caitou's food while Lu Xiaoxiao explained them to them. The two of them were not used to it at first, but they adapted. Not everything was unpalatable, but there were quite a few dishes that simply tasted terrible... The two of them felt in awe after consuming every single dish on the table. They had eaten so many things, yet they didn't feel bloated at all. Their spirits were as high as ever, and their bodies had recovered to their peak condition, and perhaps even a little further beyond that.

Lu Xiaoxiao said, "Different areas produce different foods. Not all exotic foods are ridiculously expensive. When you find yourselves in a dire situation, you'll need food to restore your strength. This is when nutritional knowledge will be extremely beneficial—I hope you guys will remember that. Alright, you'll come back tomorrow evening."

“Thank you, teacher Lu.” From their initial anger to their delightedness and submission in the end, both Huo Yuhao and He Caitou faintly felt as if they were in a different world.

Shrek Academy’s exemplary qualified teachers were proven to them one step at a time.

The two of them departed the special canteen prepared for them. Fan Yu was already waiting outside, and he said, “I’m sure you’ve regained your energy now. Train with me for another hour, and then I will send you two back to consolidate what you have learned. I forgot tell you that it’s extremely difficult to meditate after eating so many top-tier foods, so you need to consolidate your knowledge while you still feel nourished and invigorated, so that you can master the subject and integrate what you have learned tomorrow.”

Reality proved that Fan Yu wasn’t exaggerating. Huo Yuhao tried as hard as he could, but he couldn’t meditate in the slightest after he returned to the Sea God’s Pavilion. He ended up contemplating what he had learned today for over an hour, and only started cultivating with Wang Dong around midnight.

Huo Yuhao’s life suddenly became enriched, fulfilling, and wholesome from this day onwards. His studies in the outer courtyard were the most stressful, and he would have to absorb large volumes of information three days every week. He Caitou was even worse off, he was immersed in the same level of strenuous studies all seven days of the week.

Elder Mu’s teachings were different. Elder Mu didn’t ask them to memorize anything, instead placing greater emphasis on guidance and advice. Most of the time, Elder Mu would make some ambiguous description and explanation, enough to bring out the crux of the issue before he left Huo Yuhao to ponder by himself. Elder Mu’s intentions were clear—he believed that only things deliberated by yourself would be worth it, and these things would truly become part of you. Elder Mu had accumulated over two hundred years of knowledge, and subconsciously influenced Huo Yuhao over this process of guidance while helping him raise his own abilities.

Time flew by during this stressful but enriching life. Huo Yuhao made rapid progress in all aspects, and he could even feel that he was improving every single day.

The Soul Tool Department would conduct an assessment every week for him and He Caitou. As the assessors became increasingly familiar with their abilities, the respective tests became more specific and targeted. Every single instance was torturous for these two students, but every assessment made them more masterful of their weeks’ worth of knowledge. A single lapse of effort would be revealed during the assessment, and every examination was targeted at the content they had covered in the past week. The Soul Tool Department’s authorities could be said to have gone to painstaking lengths and effort for the two of them.

Huo Yuhao’s spiritual power grew at the fastest rate. With his second spiritual sea, his spiritual sea expanded at a speed conspicuously faster than before, and his spiritual power also became more compact and condensed. The first of the Skydream Iceworm’s ten seals was finally opened to Huo Yuhao, and he allowed Huo Yuhao to absorb some of the vast spiritual power contained within.

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The Eye of Destiny’s mystical effects gradually proved their worth, especially with regards to soul tools. Huo Yuhao could skip two levels in his work with the Eye of Destiny. Of course, he required Wang Dong’s

soul power to support him, and the Golden Light's regenerative capabilities to accomplish this feat. Even so, Huo Yuhao's mastery with forging soul tools quickly caught up with He Caitou's standards.

The only thing that made Huo Yuhao melancholic was his soul power's growth. He consumed large amounts of nutrients every day, but the academy was aware that they couldn't affect his future breakthroughs, so they didn't feed him any medicine that could boost soul power. Wang Dong's cultivation progressed rapidly with the Haodong power, but Huo Yuhao was limited by his Ultimate martial soul. Even though the Life Gold had refined and remade his body, his soul power growth was not even half as quick as Wang Dong's.

Huo Yuhao wasn't discouraged by this, however. At the very least, his cultivation was still improving every day, and he didn't even spend too much time thinking about his slow growth in cultivation – there were just way too many things he had to learn.

Bei Bei decided to visit the Heavenly Soul Empire's capital city, Heaven Dou City, to find Tang Ya right before the inner courtyard entry examination, but didn't find a single trace of her, as if she had vanished from the face of the earth.

This dealt a huge blow to Bei Bei. He channeled all his energy and focus on cultivation when he returned, and tried his best to raise his own standards so that he could numb himself. He gave himself a tremendously high target every month, and gave himself twenty days to reach his target while he spent the remaining ten days searching for Tang Ya outside.

The smile on Bei Bei's face never surfaced, and his typical elegance and scholarly air became tinged with a little despondence.

Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi and Jiang Nannan made it into the inner courtyard through their constant effort and unwavering perseverance. Their cultivations soared after closed-door cultivation within the inner courtyard – Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi broke through to the fifth ring first, and became powerful Soul Kings.

He Caitou wanted to complete the Ultimate Soldier Plan with Huo Yuhao, so he didn't take part in the Soul Tool Department's inner courtyard entry examination. From the Soul Tool Department's perspective, whether he or Huo Yuhao participated in the entry examination wasn't important anymore.

More than a year passed just like that, while Shrek's Seven Monsters improved in all aspects. He Caitou and Jiang Nannan's soul power both reached Rank 49, and they were only a hair's breadth away from becoming Soul Kings. Wang Dong's speed of improvement was even more frightening – over more than a year, his soul power reached Rank 44, and he managed to obtain his fourth soul ring.

Xiao Xiao was a little slower than Wang Dong, but she still broke through Rank 44 and earned her fourth soul ring as well.

Of the Shrek's Seven Monsters, only Huo Yuhao remained a Soul Elder. Even though he gave his all to cultivate, and even with the help of the academy's resources, his soul power had just broken through Rank 38.

However, nobody would ever dare to underestimate Huo Yuhao's Rank 38 soul power. His soul power after breaking through to Rank 38 was comparable to Xiao Xiao's, who was already at Rank 44, and his Ultimate Ice's formidable power was becoming increasingly conspicuous.

Huo Yuhao's rate of growth was relatively slower, but it didn't affect his natural talent with soul tools. Following his improvements in soul power and in addition to his Ultimate Ice, he was beginning to design and forge his own authentic soul tools. He was recognized as a Class 5 soul engineer, and obtained the Class 5 soul engineer badge with flying colors. Yes – only Soul Kings should be Class 5 soul engineers.

He could only forge ice-type soul tools that only he could operate even when he was forging Class 5 soul tools. These soul tools could only be activated with Ultimate Ice soul power, but one had to admit that he was making history in the world of soul engineers. Huo Yuhao was only Rank 38, but his overall strength could easily rival that of a Soul King.

The Douluo Continent was relatively peaceful over this year and a half. The Sun Moon Empire's restlessness and their eagerness for action disappeared, the Body Sect that had appeared at Shrek Academy vanished as quickly as they came, and they didn't create any more disturbances on the Continent. Huo Yuhao still found out about Ma Xiaotao in the end, and he grieved for several days because of it, while he only gradually recovered after listening to Elder Mu's consolations and guidance. He swore that he would find his sister and bring her home.

Shrek Academy, Sea God's Island, Sea God's Pavilion.

Bei Bei, He Caitou, Xu Sanshi, Jiang Nannan, Xiao Xiao, Huo Yuhao, and Wang Dong were standing side by side in silence.

Elder Mu was lying down quietly on his reclining chair. More than a year had gone by, and Elder Mu no longer had any hair. His life energy was reaching the end of its path, and even his eyes rarely opened. If Huo Yuhao and the others didn't know, they would have never expected or imagined that this old man on his last legs was Shrek Academy's number-one powerhouse – the Ultimate Douluo, the Dragon God Douluo, Mu En.

Elder Xuan stood silently beside Elder Mu. Yan Shaozhe, Cai Mei'er, Xian Lin'er, Qian Duoduo and the other elders of the Sea God's Pavilion were standing with him.

Elder Xuan looked a little aggrieved and mournful. He only felt a little better after looking at the seven children before him, as he could feel a thread of solace and comfort through them.

Sixty-seven inner courtyard disciples sat cross-legged outside the Sea God's Pavilion. The person sitting at the forefront was a young girl about twenty-five to twenty-six years of age, and her flowing black hair draped down to her waist. Her sharp and defined face was fair and impeccable, and her four fingers on both hands were interlaced, while her thumbs pointed out and against each other as she placed her hands on her calf in a crossed-legged position. This peaceful and sweet-tempered disposition made a strong impression.

Not a single one of the other sixty-six inner courtyard disciples were more than thirty years old. They formed ten rows, and everyone had the same posture as she did. Dai Yueheng was in the second row behind her. Ling Luo Chen, Chen Zifeng, Xi Xi, and Gong Yangmo, people who Huo Yuhao was familiar with, were also amongst the ranks. Their differences in cultivation determined their seating position, so Dai Yueheng was worthy to sit in the first row, while the others were positioned towards the back.

The young girl in front of everyone gradually opened her eyes. Her bright and prudential pupils flowed with deep sadness and sorrow.

“Are you really leaving us, Elder Mu?” Zhang Lexuan asked herself in her heart as she took a deep breath. As Shrek Academy’s inner courtyard’s chief disciple, she had interacted with Elder Mu far more than the other inner courtyard disciples had, and it was natural that her sentiments ran a lot deeper than the others. She really didn’t want to accept this fact, but reality was right before her eyes. Today, she could only be here to see Elder Mu off on his final journey.

Two rows of crisp tears trickled down Zhang Lexuan’s perfect face.

Dai Yueheng’s gaze was fixed on Zhang Lexuan from beginning to end. There was an unspoken rule within Shrek Academy’s inner courtyard: everybody had to address the chief disciple as ‘big senior brother’ or ‘big senior sister’. There was no question – Zhang Lexuan was revered amongst the inner courtyard disciples, while her population and popularity was unrivaled and incomparable. She was also secretly admired by many male students as they fantasized about her. However, she had never really interacted with the other students, and she channeled all her energy and effort into cultivation. Zhang Lexuan was only twenty-six years old, and she had participated in two seasons of the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament. She was team leader in both seasons, and she defeated her opponents like a knife through butter.

More frightening was the fact that she had made history in Shrek Academy’s three thousand years of existence. She was only twenty-six years old, but she was a powerful eight-ringed Douluo. She reigned supreme over the entire Shrek Academy, and even Ma Xiaotao was but a little immature girl before her. Zhang Lexuan was the only person within the inner courtyard that Ma Xiaotao respected from the bottom of her heart.

Even though Zhang Lexuan was more than six years older than Dai Yueheng, this big senior sister had always been the goddess of his dreams. She was even his true motivation for working so hard at his cultivation. He thought that if he could surpass his big senior sister in cultivation, or if he could even usurp her status as chief disciple, perhaps he would have a chance.

However, this chance had already slipped through his fingers by now. After the conclusion of the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, Dai Yueheng officially graduated from Shrek Academy’s inner courtyard, after which he returned to the Star Luo Empire and joined the military, where he was currently a regimental commander. He had had to return to the academy to settle some administrative matters, and coincidentally arrived at the same time as Elder Mu’s passing – how could he not remain to send him off?

He personally witnessed Huo Yuhao and the other six walk into the Sea God’s Pavilion. He was filled with shock and surprise – even Zhang Lexuan, the inner courtyard’s chief disciple, couldn’t personally be there to send Elder Mu off, yet Huo Yuhao and the others could... inside the Sea God’s Pavilion.

Elder Mu gradually opened his eyes. His dusky and hazy eyes suddenly became incredibly clear, and his pupils were tainted a dark blue color, as if they were portals to the deepest and darkest parts of the boundless ocean.

His eyes slowly shifted to the Bei Bei, who was standing on the leftmost side. His gaze gradually moved sideways, and paused momentarily on He Caitou, Xu Sanshi, Jiang Nannan, Xiao Xiao, Huo Yuhao, and Wang Dong. His eyes paused for the longest time on Huo Yuhao.

Tears poured uncontrollably from Huo Yuhao's eyes. He was fourteen years old by now, and he was more than a meter and eighty centimeters tall. His physique wasn't that robust or sturdy, but his body ratio was balanced, and he looked like he was full of life and vitality. His eyes were resolute and determined, and his Spirit Eyes were nimble and deep – there was even a subtle quality that intimidated others. If his features weren't immature and adolescent like that of a youth, he would have easily been mistaken for a grown adult.

Wang Dong's sockets were moist, and tears welled up in his eyes. He was more than a meter and seventy centimeters tall, and his handsome face could be described as exquisite. As he grew older, the lines on his face became gentler, while his big and powdery-blue eyes sparkled. His long and curly eyelashes were dripping with tears. Only Jiang Nannan amongst the others could rival him in terms of physical appearance. They were all Elder Mu's final disciples, and Wang Dong sobbed wildly as well.

Chapter 152.1 Reinstating the Tang Sect's Glory!

"Kids, don't cry..." Elder Mu revealed a slight smile on his face. His cheeks also started to glow slightly. He seemed more energized at this point.

"Teacher." Huo Yuhao fell to his knees on the ground and couldn't contain his emotions anymore. He cried until he lost his voice.

Wang Dong followed, and the rest of Shrek's Seven Monsters as well. Bei Bei was sobbing pitifully. His cries left the others in shock. They all looked very sorrowful.

Yan Shaozhe and Cai Mei'er kneeled too. They started to tear up.

"Great-great-grandfather."

Great-great-grandfather? This was obviously a way of addressing a blood-related elder. Father, grandfather, great-grandfather followed by great-great-grandfather! No one really knew that Bei Bei and Elder Mu were related.

Elder Mu smiled as he looked at all them as they kneeled, "Silly kids, what's there to wail about? I've already lived in this world for almost 200 years, my lifespan was longer than most. Isn't it a joyous thing that I've lived for so long? I've spent almost my entire life in Shrek Academy. It has always been my greatest pride to watch batch after batch of kids like you mature. I feel younger as I bask in your youthful energy. I'm leaving today, but I hope to leave happily. I can rest in peace seeing the state of Shrek Academy and all of you."

Huo Yuhao weeped even more when he heard Elder Mu's words. He could clearly recall all the advice and guidance that Elder Mu had given to him in the past year. Elder Mu was like a benevolent elder compared to Teacher Fan Yu. He felt extremely warmed by Elder Mu's kindness. He didn't disappoint Elder Mu either, as he managed to slowly assimilate Elder Mu's self-created secret techniques, and also managed to fuse the Tang Sect's Secret Techniques with his martial soul. He had developed a stable

foundation to become a generational talent even though his soul power hadn't increased significantly over the past year.

Elder Mu said, "I'm about to leave. Little Xuan, I've some instructions for you."

Elder Xuan rushed beside Elder Mu. His disheveled beard started to shake slightly because he was too emotional.

Elder Mu sighed, "Little Xuan, you're not young either. Don't be so emotional. I'm not leaving entirely yet! Even if I die, I'll still protect Shrek forever. Listen up. Little Xuan will succeed my role as the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion when I leave. Everything will stay the same under him as it was with me."

"Yes." All the elders acknowledged his words respectfully.

Elder Xuan was a little anxious, "Elder Mu, I..."

Elder Mu waved him off and said, "Although you're impulsive at times, your ability to see the bigger picture and your passion towards Shrek makes you suitable for this role. No one is more suitable in the academy to succeed my role. You've also benefited greatly after following me for so many years. The only instruction that I have for you is that you need to learn how to ponder over things carefully and control your own emotions. Even Du Busi may not be able to beat you with your current abilities. After I leave, I don't think he'll dare to try anything if you're in Sea God's Pavilion."

A tiger's aura remained even in the face of death. Elder Mu might be in his last stage of life, but his words were still very dominant and overpowering.

Elder Xuan was already choking on his tears, and couldn't mutter any words. The rest of the elders also agreed with Elder Mu. Indeed, Elder Xuan was the next strongest after Elder Mu in Shrek Academy. It was fitting for him to succeed Elder Mu as the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion.

"Shaozhe, Mei'er, come over." Elder Mu said gently.

"Teacher." Yan Shaozhe and Cai Mei'er hurried two steps forward before kneeling down beside Elder Mu.

Elder Mu said deeply, "Shaozhe, I'm the most worried about you. You lack a sense of magnanimity. I'll give you 10 years to change this. After that, proceed to the Sea God's Pavilion first level for deep meditation. If you still can't pass my test, you'll resign from your dean's position."

Yan Shaozhe shuddered, but didn't dare to rebut. He replied respectfully, "Yes, Teacher."

"Mei'er." Elder Mu shifted his gaze towards her.

"Teacher." Cai Mei'er was the Martial Soul Department's Vice-Dean. Her authority was considered quite great in Shrek Academy too. However, she was just a little girl in front of Elder Mu.

Elder Mu was much gentler towards her, "You have contributed greatly to the academy over all these years. If Shaozhe can't pass my test in 10 years' time, you shall enter the Sea God's Pavilion and succeed his role as Dean. In addition, Lexuan will be promoted to the Martial Soul Department's Vice-Dean and enter the Sea God's Pavilion after I pass on."

“Yes, Teacher. Don’t die...” Cai Mei’er leapt into Elder Mu’s chest and started bawling.

Elder Mu caressed her head gently and said to Yan Shaozhe, “Shaozhe, I hope that you’ll understand why I’m so strict towards you. 10 years is not long. I hope that you can make good use of this time. Do you understand?”

Yan Shaozhe seemed to have understood something, and looked deeply at Elder Mu. He rubbed the tears from his eyes and maintained a serious look on his face. He replied to Elder Mu seriously, “Teacher, I understand. I won’t disappoint you. Shrek won’t fall even after you leave.”

Elder Mu finally smiled, “Good. It seems like you’ve finally got it. Pull Mei’er to one side. I don’t have much time left.”

Elder Mu still had a lot of things to say before he passed on.

Yan Shaozhe nodded his head slightly before looking deeply at Elder Mu. He lifted Cai Mei’er up and brought her to one side.

“Lin’er, Duoduo, come over.”

Xian Lin’er and Qian Duoduo rushed to kneel beside Elder Mu. Xian Lin’er was crying as much as Cai Mei’er, and couldn’t even speak properly because of it.

Elder Mu sighed and said, “Lin’er, do you know what your greatest flaw is?”

Xian Lin’er sobbed while looking at Elder Mu.

Elder Mu said gently, “You are too emotional and direct. If you were a man, I’d let you take Shaozhe’s position, and I’d be assured to hand over Shrek Academy’s greatest responsibilities to you. But as a lady, your flaws are magnified. Your emotional attachments render you unable to improve yourself. Otherwise, your achievements would have superseded Shaozhe’s and you wouldn’t be stuck at the barrier to becoming a Transcendent Douluo. I’m assured in passing on the reins of the Soul Tool Department to you and Duoduo. Both of you are sufficiently open-minded. The speed of the Soul Tool Department’s development will depend on both of you. The future of soul masters is deeply tied to soul tools. I’m unsure of how this path will progress, but I need the both of you to explore and discover its secrets.”

“After I leave, promote Fan Yu to the Soul Tool Department’s Vice-Dean. I hope that the Soul Tool Department will produce a Class 9 soul engineer in 10 years time. In 3 months, it’ll be the date that I set with the Hallmaster of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. Fan Yu will lead the group. I believe that the Hallmaster of the Illustrious Virtue Hall won’t try anything in the open. Let those that he sends over learn according to their abilities. Don’t create any barriers for them. Shrek Academy has always been very straightforward. If they’re capable enough, they should be given the opportunity to learn. We cannot pull any tricks on them. I believe you and Shaozhe will handle this well.”

Xian Lin’er only nodded repeatedly. Qian Duoduo supported her from one side and acknowledged Elder Mu’s words respectfully.

Elder Mu sighed and said, “This will be my last order as the Master of the Sea God’s Pavilion.”

All the elders stepped forward as they heard his words. They kneeled on one knee and Elder Mu's voice resonated through the entire Sea God's Pavilion, and even echoed in the Sea God's Island.

"From today onwards, the Soul Tool Department must be developed at all costs, and the interactions between the Martial Soul Department and the Soul Tool Department must be strengthened. Due to the astronomical costs of running the Soul Tool Department, half of Shrek Academy's profits from its estates in Shrek City will be diverted towards the Soul Tool Department. If the Soul Tool Department can produce a Class 10 soul engineer one day, that person will succeed my role as Master of the Sea God's Pavilion."

"Yes——" The elders agreed respectfully.

Elder Mu looked tired after he finished speaking. He shut his eyes slightly before opening them again.

"Bei Bei, He Caitou, Xu Sanshi, Jiang Nannan, Xiao Xiao, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong. The seven of you, stand up."

The seven of them stood up, all with tears in their eyes. Huo Yuhao's face even had turned pale from his sorrow. He only managed to stand straight with Wang Dong's help.

Elder Mu scanned the seven of them, before his attention was drawn to Xu Sanshi, "Xu Sanshi and Jiang Nannan, I have a request."

"What?" Elder Mu's words shocked them. It wasn't very appropriate for Elder Mu to mention the word 'request' with his current status. Furthermore, he was even saying it just before he passed on. Xu Sanshi and Jiang Nannan felt the great pressure. They both kneeled on the ground.

Xu Sanshi's voice was trembling a little, "Elder Mu, feel free to instruct us. If we can manage it, we'll do anything to fulfil your request."

Elder Mu sighed and said, "This is a personal request. I hope that the two of you can join the Tang Sect like the rest of your brothers and sisters."

"Join the Tang Sect?" Xu Sanshi was a little stunned as he lifted his head. He hadn't expected Elder Mu to make such a request.

Elder Mu replied, "Ten thousand years ago, the Tang Sect was still very prosperous. Without Ancestor Tang San's Tang Sect, we wouldn't have had these past thousands of years of Shrek's glory."

Chapter 152.2: Reinstating the Tang Sects Glory!

"The Tang Sect has walked towards collapse as soul tools have developed over the years, and the talents in the sect kept on diminishing. Eventually, it was encroached upon and collapsed. Shrek Academy has always maintained its neutrality in the continent, thus the academy can't do anything to save the Tang Sect. But it pains me to see the Tang Sect's collapse. Bei Bei found Xiao Ya, and he joined the sect because I told him to.

"After the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament ended, all of you became the new generation of Shrek's Seven Monsters. This title and glory will follow you throughout your lives. The first generation of Shrek's Seven Monsters were all from the Tang Sect. That's why I hope this continues. Shrek is ultimately an academy, and can't intervene in the continent's matters unless a

critical situation pops up. But if all of you belong to one sect, you won't be restricted. I hope that the Tang Sect can rise and be as powerful as it was tens of thousands of years ago. I believe that all of you are not inferior to the first generation of Shrek's Seven Monsters in terms of talent. Perhaps you may be restricted because you were born into a sect, but I still hope that you can join the Tang Sect with Jiang Nannan. If the seven of you work together and develop the Tang Sect, you can make it as influential as the Body Sect."

Elder Mu's breathing quickened as he spoke those words. His cheeks became redder too. His eyes were filled with hope as he looked at Xu Sanshi and Jiang Nannan. He was waiting for their answers.

"I'm willing," Jiang Nannan spoke first. Her teary eyes revealed a resolute look. "Elder Mu, please rest assured. I'm willing to join the Tang Sect. If I'm not remembering wrongly, Ancestor Xiao Wu from the first generation of Shrek's Seven Monsters had the same martial soul as me. I will work hard to follow in her footsteps, and help the Tang Sect regain its former glory."

Bei Bei heaved a sigh of relief as he heard Jiang Nannan's words. That was because Xu Sanshi had once mentioned that he would join the Tang Sect if Jiang Nannan was willing. Jiang Nannan had finally agreed. However, where was Tang Ya?

It was undeniable that he had tried to get close to Tang Ya at the most difficult period of her life, and joined the Tang Sect under Elder Mu's instruction. However, he had fallen in love with her after interacting with her all these years. But Tang Ya had disappeared at this most critical period. He had heard nothing from her over the past year.

"I'm willing too," Xu Sanshi agreed. He looked at Jiang Nannan and said, "Elder Mu, I'm willing to join the Tang Sect and break my ties with my family's sect. We'll work hard together to reinstate the Tang Sect."

Elder Mu smiled and waved his right hand gently, and a soft force lifted them off the ground. "Good. This is good. I'm finally doing something for the Tang Sect on behalf of Shrek Academy. I will be watching all of you from above and waiting for the day all of you succeed. Bei Bei, come over."

Bei Bei rushed up beside Elder Mu and lowered his head. He greeted, "Great-great grandfather."

Elder Mu said, "You're the only successor from my lineage. Your parents died young as they were carrying out their duties as Shrek Guardians. I was very hurt by that incident. I can see you carrying on the light-type bloodline. Although your martial soul only has the partial mutation abilities of the Radiant Holy Dragon, our bloodline was inherited from the Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon's family successor, Yu Xiaogang. He was also Shrek Academy's notable Grandmaster. Even after thousands of years, the Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon's bloodline hasn't changed, even if our surnames have. Your martial soul is partly mutated. It's not a bad thing. I'm about to leave, so I'll help you to stabilize the Radiant Holy Dragon's bloodline. From today onwards, you need to do your best to become stronger and continue to walk this path of the Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon."

Elder Mu's thin and frail right hand gently caressed Bei Bei's head as he spoke. Suddenly, the entire Sea God's Pavilion lit up, and an intense golden light flashed once before disappearing. Bei Bei groaned and collapsed on the ground. A bolt of golden electricity flashed repeatedly around him, and his entire body shone subtly with a golden light.

This was the strength of an Ultimate Douluo. Even as he reached his life's end, he was still able to maneuver his powers and those of the Golden Tree. He managed to stabilize Bei Bei's bloodline in a split second. Bei Bei's martial soul mutation was stabilized completely just like that. Just as Elder Mu had said, it had been advanced to a Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon.

The color on Elder Mu's cheeks faded and turned completely pale. He wanted to lift his hands, but seemed to be completely out of strength. His voice had also become weaker. "Yuhao, Wang Dong, come over."

Huo Yuhao leapt up beside Elder Mu when he finally heard that it was his turn. He gripped onto Elder Mu's right hand, stuttering. "Teacher, teacher..."

Elder Mu struggled to open his eyes and smiled. "Kid, don't be sad. I've accepted quite a few disciples in my life, but accepting you at this stage of my life is the proudest thing I've ever done. Your Ultimate Ice may cultivate at a slower speed than others, but don't be disheartened or impatient. You'll only become consumed if you rush to achieve success. You're working hard enough at your cultivation already. You need to relax when it's time to do so. You'll proceed to the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy to learn in three months' time. The next three years will be very important for you. They will concern the success of Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department. Remember not to use your Eye of Destiny during that period of time, unless your life is under threat."

"Uh, uh..." Huo Yuhao was completely speechless now. His teardrops fell onto Elder Mu's palm one by one.

Elder Mu forced a smile, "I've basically imparted all my experience and research to you. You must assimilate it. You're Shrek Academy and the Tang Sect's future hope. You need to aid Bei Bei and Tang Ya in the future in reinstating the Tang Sect's glory. I practiced a divination on Tang Ya before. While she'll meet with a huge crisis, a benefactor will help her. I can confirm that she's alive. You must help Bei Bei find her.

"In addition, I need to warn you that the Douluo Continent cannot be ruled by a different empire. You must work hard to prevent the rise of the Sun Moon Empire. This is my last hope. Once your cultivation reaches nine rings and you become a Titled Douluo, I hope that you can become the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion."

"Yes, teacher. I promise you anything. Rest first," Huo Yuhao finally managed to string a sentence together.

Elder Mu shook his head slightly. "Fool, you're a fool. How can you not see it? I won't really die. I will always be here to watch all of you grow, and watch as Shrek's legacy is passed down forever. The academy will face a few crises in the near future. The responsibility on you is greater than anyone else. The Ultimate Soldier Plan must continue. The academy has imparted everything that's needed to be imparted to you. We'll need you to continue to work hard and discover the future of this extreme path. There's no end to this path."

"Yes..." Huo Yuhao gripped onto Elder Mu's hands tightly. He could clearly feel that Elder Mu was reaching the end of his life now, and could pass on at any time.

Elder Mu struggle to turn his attention towards Wang Dong. His voice also became weaker, “Wang Dong, do you think that I’ve always been very biased?”

Wang Dong was in a daze. He wiped the tears in his eyes. He didn’t lie, and nodded his head gently.

Elder Mu smiled and said, “That’s because I can’t completely see through you. I can’t see what you’ve experienced, or what your future will be like. Maybe your talent is not much inferior to Yuhao’s. But I can sense an aura from you that makes me shudder every time I try to see through you. I can confirm that you’re human, and not a soul beast. However, your secret is bound to be...”

Elder Mu’s breathing became faster as he spoke till here. He struggled to say, “I’ve settled the matter between you and Yuhao. You will cultivate in the inner courtyard for these few years and wait for him to return.

“Shrek’s ancestors, Mu En is coming...”

Elder Mu increased the volume of his last words. An intense golden light also suddenly shot out from his body.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were instantly separated. Elder Mu’s body rose from his reclining chair. A magical scene appeared. Two yellow, one purple, three black and three red soul rings appeared on his body. A sonorous dragon’s roar resonated in the air.

The entirety of Sea God’s Pavilion turned bright golden, and a huge golden beam of light shot up into the sky from it. All of Shrek Academy, and even Shrek City, was shrouded in golden light.

Elder Mu’s bent back started to become straighter as he was soaked in the golden light. His frail-looking face also became younger and younger. Even his thin and sickly body started to gain weight.

There was a look of hope and reluctance in his gaze. Elder Mu looked at everyone in front of him quietly. He lifted his right hand and gently waved. His gaze eventually landed on Huo Yuhao. No further sound was made, and he only gazed on his last disciple benevolently.

The golden light became stronger and stronger, while Elder Mu became younger and younger. He slowly turned from his original frail self into a young man .

Chapter 152.3: Reinstating the Tang Sects Glory!

The younger appearance of Elder Mu bore a shocking resemblance with Bei Bei, but also had a more cheerful disposition. Elder Mu’s body gradually turned gold, as golden dragon scales started to grow from underneath the skin from head to toe.

Elder Mu lifted his limbs. The intense golden light turned scarlet-gold before turning an orange-gold, yellowish-gold, greenish-gold, bluish-gold and purplish-gold. The final purplish-gold eventually turned whitish-gold. Elder Mu laughed, and a sonorous dragon roar was let loose. His body shook, and he turned into a white dragon that exuded an intense light before disappearing from within the Pavilion.

Even from afar, a huge white dragon could be seen in the skies above Shrek Academy. The bright glare of the sun seemed to be blotted out by the golden light.

The sonorous dragon roar kept on resonating in the sky. The intense golden light made it seemed as if it were swimming in a golden ocean.

The frightening aura spread outwards, whereas the golden light shot straight down and covered the entire Sea God's Pavilion.

All living beings on the Sea God's Island were covered in a dim layer of golden fog. They could feel the pure light power cleansing their bodies, removing the impurities within. Their soul power's were compressed and their cultivation was boosted.

Yan Shaozhe's voice resonated throughout the entire Sea God's Pavilion, "Everyone, sit cross-legged and meditate." Even though he was sobbing, he still sounded very commanding at this point. This was the last present that Elder Mu was giving the academy!

Everyone quickly sat cross-legged and circulated their soul power, basking in the extreme light aura.

The except to this was Huo Yuhao, who rushed out of the Sea God's Pavilion and looked towards the huge white dragon in the sky. Far from being shocked at its appearance, Huo Yuhao was saddened. "Teacher! Teacher!!" He shouted into the air. However, his voice didn't echo, and it quick disappeared as it left his mouth.

The huge white dragon seemed to have seen him from the sky too. Then its huge body wriggled as it looked southwards; towards the Great Star Dou Forest.

Another sonorous dragon roar came out. The frightening dragon's aura crushed and dissipated all the clouds within the nearest thousands of square miles.

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In the inner Great Star Dou Forest. The Region of Savage Beasts. The Forbidden Grounds.

It was the center of the Forbidden Grounds, where the strongest soul beast slowly lifted its head, looking at the north seriously. An aura of concentrated darkness rose up and diffused into the air before converting into a dragon form. The roar of another dragon sounded, but it disappeared instantly.

The aura of darkness then dispersed to cover the entire Forbidden Grounds, completely blocking out the dragon roar from the Radiant Holy Dragon.

A figure stayed silently in the center of the Forbidden Grounds. It was a man who kneeled on a single knee. His long, golden hair flowed behind his back, and his figure more than three meters tall. His charming and resolute-looking face bore an indescribable sense of dominance, and although he was kneeling, not a single soul beast could be found in the vicinity.

"Boss, you've finally awoken." The golden-haired man said respectfully.

An illusory voice sounded, "Di Tian, I've only temporarily ended my sleep because of this Radiant Holy Dragon's aura, I've not truly ended my sleep yet. Remember not to provoke Shrek Academy while I'm asleep."

Di Tian? Was he the powerful presence that approached Elder Xuan when he caught the Emperor Beast? He was in his human form right now.

“Boss, he is threatening us. Don’t tell me that we’re afraid of him?” Di Tian’s expression was filled with determination, and a dominant aura spread while golden light shot out.

“Not at all, an Ultimate Douluo can’t make the entirety of the Great Star Dou Forest fearful, but the important thing is that Shrek Academy can connect with that place. Remember my words. My cultivation is at a critical juncture, I will awake again in 10,000 years. At that time, the humans’ rule will be over.”

“Yes.” The Sky Emperor replied respectfully. However, an ecstatic look flashed across his eyes, and he thought to himself, “10,000 years is too long. We need to grab hold of time now!”

The aura of darkness slowly faded away, and everything returned to normal. The Sky Emperor stood up and coldly looked in Shrek Academy’s direction. His golden aura soon also disappeared.

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The Radiant Holy Dragon nodded towards the south, then reluctantly looked down at Huo Yuhao down below, slightly touched. By this point, the entire Sea God’s Island was bathed in gold.

It happened without a sound: The huge white dragon dissipated into spots of golden light across the sky, which swiftly descended.

Elder Mu’s voice rang in Huo Yuhao’s ears, “Kid, let me give you one last gift.”

He only saw a patch of gold in front of him before he fainted from the extreme sorrow, and a wave of heat rushed into Huo Yuhao’s body.

The countless spots of golden light gathered towards Sea God’s Pavilion. A huge golden light projection gradually made its entrance, almost like it was stretching down.

The golden projection was a bright tree, it grew almost 100 meters tall as it stretched outwards. Its branches extended, and instantaneously engulfed the Sea God’s Island in golden light. The illusion of a white dragon above it disappeared, the light aura dissipated, and finally, the projection of the tree shrunk slowly before disappearing into the Sea God’s Pavilion.

Everything seemed to return to normal. But this normality was missing something, the Hallmaster of the Sea God’s Pavilion, the Ultimate Douluo, the Dragon God Douluo, the strongest person in all of Shrek Academy and the Radiant Holy Dragon—Elder Mu.

Elder Mu had passed on. Shrek’s pillar had collapsed. On Sea God’s Island, the sorrowful cries and aura remained...

When Huo Yuhao regained consciousness, he found himself in his room on the Sea God’s Island, which Elder Mu had granted to him, he also gave one to Wang Dong who was crawled up beside him sleeping soundly. But with two streams of tears still on his face.

Huo Yuhao’s body jerked a little, and his memory gradually recovered. His tears also started to flow.

“Teacher has left. Teacher has left in such a shocking way. Teacher, teacher...”

Huo Yuhao's sobbing woke up Wang Dong, he lifted his head to look at him. The two of them started to cry loudly together.

After crying for 15 minutes, the two of them slowly calmed down. Huo Yuhao jumped off the bed. "How did Teacher pass, in the end?"

Wang Dong lowered his head and said, "Teacher turned into light energy and fused with the Golden Tree. He hasn't died, just like he said before. He'll always be watching over us. His powers have already become a part of the Golden Tree."

Huo Yuhao nodded his head forcefully. He said resolutely, "Yes, teacher isn't dead yet. He won't die. He's still alive. He just changed his body." Huo Yuhao hurriedly knelt down and kowtowed three times.

"Teacher, I won't disappoint you. Shrek Academy is my home, and it'll always be my home. For Shrek Academy, and for the Tang Sect, I will give my all."

Huo Yuhao stood up suddenly after he finished speaking. He pulled Wang Dong's hand and said, "Wang Dong, let's start cultivating. We can't disappoint Teacher."

Wang Dong could clearly sense that something was wrong with Huo Yuhao. But how could he agitate him any further at this point? He understood the importance of kinship in Huo Yuhao's mind through his knowledge of Huo Yuhao's background, and he wished to lessen the sorrow filling Huo Yuhao's heart.

Wang Dong nodded and sat on the bed with Huo Yuhao. Their Haodong Power surged and started to flow in their bodies.

However, Huo Yuhao started to cry just as they started. He couldn't help but open his eyes, "Teacher..."

He couldn't help it. Because he could feel his soul power had reached the Rank 40 bottleneck.

He recalled what Elder Mu had said before he passed out. Yes! This was Elder Mu's last gift for him.

He would have needed need three months to half a year to reach Rank 40 with his cultivation speed. But now, he managed to reach Rank 40 instantly with Elder Mu's help.

Wang Dong naturally felt the changes in Huo Yuhao's body. He said, "Yuhao, you need to cheer up. Teacher is watching us now. You don't want him to be disappointed, so let's start cultivating."

He was really worried that Huo Yuhao would have an emotional breakdown. The Haodong Power entered Huo Yuhao's body as guided by Wang Dong before it circulating slowly.

Huo Yuhao didn't say anything. He continued to cultivate along with Wang Dong. Their soul powers undulated and flowed along their passageways.

Huo Yuhao seemed to go mad over the next three months. However, this madness was only shown in his cultivation.

Within these three months, he focused all his energy on increasing his abilities. He didn't even bother to obtain his fourth soul ring. He was either meditating, practicing soul tool creation, training his soul skills or using the Tang Sect's Secret Techniques every day, sometimes doing all of these things. He didn't speak much in a day, as if speaking would only delay him.

Chapter 153.1: A Farewell Between Bosom Friends

With his current state, everyone was extremely worried for Huo Yuhao. Even Elder Xuan trailed him for a while, he discovered that Huo Yuhao had sealed up emotionally and immersed himself in this crazy cultivation state. However, it was undeniable the progress Huo Yuhao was making in this time. He was calm and cold, treating his body like a soul tool, trying to sculpt and cultivating tirelessly.

Practically, all his teachers advised him to rest, but he didn't listen. He wanted to cultivate every moment without rest, and no-one could dissuade him from it.

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Countless streaks of golden light flashed, and a mountain rock was crushed in front of Huo Yuhao. Following this, Huo Yuhao put the away the soul tools on his person.

Success! This was the first Class 6 soul tool that he had successfully created. Although he needed to use the Eye of Destiny to increase his spiritual power to be able to control the soul tool when he used it, he had still succeeded.

"Huo Yuhao." Elder Xuan's voice sounded.

Huo Yuhao stopped unwittingly and turned around. He was a little stunned as he looked at Elder Xuan. He said respectfully, "Elder Xuan."

Elder Xuan said deeply, "Follow me to the Sea God's Pavilion."

Huo Yuhao was puzzled, and said, "But I still need to cultivate. There are still twelve segments that I haven't completed."

Elder Xuan was furious. "This is an order. Do you think you can fulfil Elder Mu's wish by being like this? Three months. You've gone mad for three months. If this continues, your body and mind will collapse, but you still won't fulfil Elder Mu's wish. Do you want me to watch you die? Furthermore, there's something more important for you to do now, so you can't cultivate like that anymore."

Huo Yuhao's body jerked slightly, and he turned before walking away. He muttered, "I want to cultivate, I want to cultivate." As he spoke, his pace quickened.

A lamentable look flashed across Elder Xuan's eyes. What an emotional kid! While on the surface he was reprimanding Huo Yuhao, underneath how could he not feel heartache? He was proud on Elder Mu's behalf, and envious of him for having such a great disciple too.

Elder Xuan's figure flashed, and he reached behind Huo Yuhao before pulling him away.

Elder Xuan completely overwhelmed Huo Yuhao, but Huo Yuhao also reacted instantly. His leg slid forward, and intense white light shone from his body, covering it.

He used his left toes as an axis, and spun around like a gyroscope. The Darkgolden Terrorclaws turned into five meters long claw projections that grabbed towards Elder Xuan.

Battling seemed to have become instinctual.

His Darkgolden Terrorclaws had become stronger over the past year. Almost becoming real from their tangible state. With them was a layer of diamond ice crystals, which meant that Huo Yuhao had combined his Darkgolden Terrorclaws and the Ice Empress' Pincer. It's important to note that the two are completely different soul skills, one came from a soul ring, the other from a soul bone. One was of Ultimate Ice element, the other metal.

Just adding the strength of the Ice Empress' Pincer to the Darkgolden Terrorclaws wasn't hard, instead their strengths had been completely fused. Leading to a complete transformation, all of this happened under Elder Xuan's guidance.

Although Huo Yuhao was in no rush to become a four-ringed Soul Ancestor, he still couldn't be defeated by any of the Shrek's Seven Monsters. Even Bei Bei's Radiant Holy Dragon or Xu Sanshi's Awakening of the Xuanwu Turtle could only repress him at best. However, this was under the assumption Huo Yuhao wasn't using any soul tools. Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi were both Soul Kings, able to fight lower level Soul Emperors with some difficulty. After the experiment earlier, Huo Yuhao could be considered almost a Class 6 soul engineer, equivalent to a soul emperor.

Once Huo Yuhao obtained his fourth soul ring, his powers would be on par with Bei Bei's and Xu Sanshi's at least. In reality he would be slightly better than anyone else in the Shrek's Seven Monsters, even comparing him to Wang Dong. His mastery in the martial department and soul tool department was slowly revealing its advantages.

Elder Xuan groaned as he faced the Darkgolden Terrorclaws. He moved his shoulder slightly, and a layer of yellow light spread from his body. When that layer of yellow light appeared, it was contorted tremendously, making Elder Xuan's body illusory in appearance.

The Darkgolden Terrorclaws caused a piercing sound to echo out as they struck the yellow light. Huo Yuhao finally reacted to what he was doing, and hurriedly stopped his actions. The Darkgolden Terrorclaw's projection disappeared instantly. But Elder Xuan extended his right hand and chopped down on Huo Yuhao's neck, even through the Ice Empress' Armor Elder Xuan still forced Huo Yuhao to collapse in one strike.

Elder Xuan grabbed with his right hand and pulled him over. After that, he threw Huo Yuhao over his shoulder. He sighed and mumbled, "This brat needs to rest. It's been tough on him over the past three months."

After a short while, Elder Xuan brought Huo Yuhao to the Sea God's Pavilion. Although Elder Xuan had already succeeded the role of Hallmaster of the Sea God's Pavilion, he didn't move into Elder Mu's former room, choosing to remain in his own.

There were two people in his room at the moment—Fan Yu and He Caitou. He Caitou was in far better shape now, and his muscles were like a replica of Qian Duoduo's. His tanned skin gave a healthy glow, and while he still looked as goofy as ever, his disposition was much more mature than a year prior, developing a pensive look. Much like Huo Yuhao, he had also put in a lot of hard work over the last year. He had also slowly found his path, the path that would end up giving him the title of the Origin of Destruction.

Elder Xuan placed Huo Yuhao on his bed, giving him some medicine to calm his mind. Fan Yu asked respectfully, "Elder Xuan, how's Yuhao?"

Elder Xuan replied, "He's too tensed up. Elder Mu's death was a huge blow to him. However, I believe that he can overcome this. The last three months he's been numbing himself with cultivation. We'll let him rest. You should prepare to leave in three days, Shaozhe will personally escort you to Heavenly Dou Empire's Maple Leaf City to make the exchange with the students of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. Fan Yu, we leave this great responsibility to you!"

Fan Yu asked, "Elder Xuan, are we really not going to increase Yuhao's soul rings?"

Elder Xuan laughed and said, "Let him keep a low profile, we're in no hurry to make him a soul ancestor right now. Let them underestimate him so he can learn stuff easier. The important thing for our students is to see more, learn more, say less and do less. Remember that. Whether or not we can get our hands on their core knowledge is on all of you."

Fan Yu nodded and replied, "I understand. If we meet with a suitable soul beast for him in the next three years, I will consider letting him add a soul ring. Otherwise, we'll try to keep it on the down-low to keep the Sun Moon Academy in the dark."

Elder Xuan said, "The Illustrious Virtue Hall is just like us. To obtain our core knowledge they've opened their Illustrious Virtue Hall to us, and we the inner courtyard to them. While they may not try to limit you in what you can learn, they could attempt to impart advanced knowledge beyond your comprehension. Even if you don't fully understand what they give you, be sure to fully record it for later. They'll be wary of you, ensuring Caitou and Yuhao's protection is your highest priority."

"Yes."

Elder Xuan looked at Huo Yuhao, who was lying on the bed, and said, "Elder Mu's death has changed the mind of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. We'll exchange our students at Maple Leaf City, and they will return in three months, just before the next Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament. The venue for which will also be held in Maple Leaf City this time. The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy is being very sincere since they're anxious to break through in the soul masters area. Likewise we're very anxious to have a Class 10 soul engineer. Both academies will send out ten students, from the Sun Moon side both Xiao Hongchen and Meng Hongchen will be coming, and then on our side, Elder Mu agreed to send Yuhao as one of the ten. For the other eight students, besides Yuhao and Caitou we must pick them with care. Caitou, you must try to shine in the Illustrious Virtue Hall and be the center of their attention, do you understand what I mean?"

He Caitou nodded without any hesitation. "Elder Xuan, I understand. The other eight students are there to protect me and Huo Yuhao, while I'm there as a second layer of protection for Yuhao. If he wants to keep a low profile, then I must keep a high one."

Elder Xuan nodded satisfactorily and said, "Okay. Go and prepare first. I will return a sane Huo Yuhao to you in three days."

"Yes." Fan Yu answered, but he was still a little worried as he looked at Huo Yuhao. Could he recover in three days? He was more than aware of just how hard Huo Yuhao had been working the past three months, he was internally broken. Elder Mu's death had just been a great blow to him.

Fan Yu left with He Caitou, leaving Elder Xuan with Huo Yuhao in the room.

Chapter 153.2: A Farewell Between Bosom Friends

Elder Xuan sat on a chair beside him and looked at Huo Yuhao quietly. He revealed a slight smile on his face.

“Silly kid, even I can’t deal with your stubbornness! It seems like I have to let you know beforehand.”

Three days passed in a flash.

Wang Dong was a little lonely as he sat in his room. Even though he hadn’t become an official inner courtyard disciple, he’d been cultivating on Sea God’s Island the entire time. His guiding teacher had changed from Elder Mu to Elder Xuan, and he now learned alongside Xiao Xiao. Elder Xuan had told him that he could take the inner courtyard test when the next academic year started, then enter the inner courtyard. The same was true for Xiao Xiao. After all, they were both soul ancestors already. If they weren’t able to pass the inner courtyard test even after being guided by Elder Mu and Elder Xuan, they would most certainly be wasting the two elders’ efforts.

Was Yuhao leaving?

Wang Dong felt a tinge of bitterness in his heart. He was the one most affected by Huo Yuhao’s transformation during the past three months. Huo Yuhao had sealed himself up almost completely. Besides the time they spent cultivating together, Wang Dong hadn’t seen Huo Yuhao at all. As the days passed, he’d clearly felt Huo Yuhao’s mental state tensing up. If not for the fact that Huo Yuhao’s spiritual power was so great, he would’ve broken down already. He truly was too tensed up.

Wang Dong tried to speak to him, but Huo Yuhao wouldn’t listen. When he spoke too much, Huo Yuhao would start to tear up and mumble the word ‘teacher’.

Wang Dong had to admit that Huo Yuhao’s abilities had improved by leaps and bounds in these past three months of tireless cultivation. He’d managed to increase his soul power to Rank 40, but his cultivation had been stuck at a bottleneck. He needed to obtain his fourth soul ring to proceed any further. But this hadn’t affected his cultivation. Wang Dong was certain that Huo Yuhao’s abilities had superseded his own completely. Even though this had been the case in the past, he’d been an assault-type soul master then, and Huo Yuhao more of a control-type soul master. However, Huo Yuhao was now very dominant in assault techniques. Wang Dong didn’t even think that he’d have a shot at defeating Huo Yuhao if they were to fight now. Of course, this was based on the condition that Huo Yuhao could use soul tools. In the past year, Wang Dong’s abilities had also improved greatly!

I heard that he’s leaving tomorrow. Elder Xuan has already taken him away for three days. Can he really recover? It’ll be almost three years until we see him again if he leaves! When his thoughts reached this point, Wang Dong couldn’t help but purse his lips, his pinkish-blue eyes revealing a trace of reluctance.

He was also in pain from Elder Mu’s death. However, he was much more rational than Huo Yuhao. After all, his background was completely different; he didn’t crave kinship as much as Huo Yuhao did. However, he’d developed a very close relationship with Huo Yuhao over these few years.

Wang Dong had even proposed that he go to the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy with Huo Yuhao, but he was rejected. The reason was very simple—one of them had to remain in the

academy since they were both Elder Mu's closed-door disciples. This was in case of any emergencies. If something happened to Huo Yuhao, at least Wang Dong would still be in the academy. Although Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao were less innately talented than Huo Yuhao, they still possessed twin martial souls! They could still carry on the fire of the academy even if something happened to Huo Yuhao. Moreover, Wang Dong didn't work with soul tools!

"Bang, bang, bang." A knock on the door sounded, causing Wang Dong to regain his awareness.

Wang Dong walked towards the door and asked, "Who is it?"

"It's me." A familiar voice sounded. Wang Dong stopped when he heard this voice. Immediately afterwards, he burst towards the door and opened it.

Huo Yuhao was standing outside the door.

His eyes looked clear, and the sense of loss and sorrow had completely disappeared from his eyes.

Precisely because they were so familiar with each other, Wang Dong was able to sense the changes in his body. He was stunned and asked, "Did you come back from the dead?"

Huo Yuhao chortled and said, "I guess so."

Wang Dong blinked. "How did you do it?"

Huo Yuhao answered naturally, "Of course it was because Elder Xuan who helped me.

"I've already thought it through; a dead person can't be revived. If I continued like I was, I'd collapse before I could fulfil teacher's hopes. Teacher wouldn't be able to rest in peace if that happens!"

Wang Dong opened his eyes wide. "Wow, how did you manage to figure it out? I wasn't able to elicit any reaction from you even though I tried persuading you for three months!" He became more frustrated the more he spoke. He couldn't help but grab Huo Yuhao's collar and pull him into his room before shutting the door forcefully.

Huo Yuhao laughed bitterly and said, "Be gentler, I'm about to leave. Why're you not leaving me a good last impression of you?"

Wang Dong's body jerked when he heard the word 'leave'. Indeed! Huo Yuhao was leaving the next day. He had to leave, especially since his mind had completely recovered.

"Are you here to say goodbye?" Wang Dong's voice trembled slightly.

Huo Yuhao nodded his head gently and held onto Wang Dong's shoulders while pushing him further into the room. "I'm leaving tomorrow. This trip to the Sun Moon Imperial Engineering Academy is of the utmost importance. I'll be leaving on an important mission for two and a half years, and won't be back during this period of time."

Wang Dong, feeling a little impulsive, said, "I'll find Elder Xuan and ask him to let me tag along again. We have four martial soul fusion skills! You'll be completely safe with me around."

Huo Yuhao held Wang Dong back and shook his head. "It's useless; Elder Xuan won't change his mind. Besides, you don't even like soul tools. Going there would only affect your future cultivation. Two and a

half years will pass in the blink of an eye. Furthermore, even though we're quite outstanding among others of our same age, we're nothing outside the academy. While the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy is packed with soul engineers, they shouldn't have a lack of Titled Douluo. Don't tell me we're better than all of them? You'll only delay your own cultivation if you go there. Staying here is the best choice. Besides, you can monitor Xiao Hongchen and Meng Hongchen if you remain in the academy. In three years time, they'll be our strongest opponents in the tournament. Luck won't always be on our side. They already had five soul rings in the previous tournament. If we face them again, they'll give us even more problems."

Wang Dong clenched his fists, "But... two and a half years... I..."

Huo Yuhao smiled and continued to hold onto his shoulder, "Wang Dong, you've become more and more feminine over this past year! You can't bear to see me go?"

"Scram, you're the one who's turned feminine." Wang Dong pushed his hand away and snorted. "I was just thinking that you'll lag behind me after your two and a half years in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. Your speed of cultivation is already extremely slow. Without me around, you'll become even slower."

Huo Yuhao replied, "Alright, stop acting. Just say it if you can't bear for me to leave. Stop finding excuses. I'm reluctant to leave you too."

Huo Yuhao's words touched Wang Dong in his softest spot. His eyes started to turn red, and he suddenly rushed up to Huo Yuhao and hugged him extremely tightly.

Huo Yuhao subconsciously hugged him back. He was stunned to realize that Wang Dong's body seemed to be softer than before. The two of them hadn't unleashed their martial fusion soul skills for some time, thus Huo Yuhao hadn't hugged Wang Dong for a long time. He felt extremely comfortable as he was hugged by Wang Dong. Weird emotions started to spread in his heart.

"No! I'm into girls!" A petite figure surfaced in Huo Yuhao's mind. Even though almost two years had passed, he couldn't forget the surprise that figure had brought him back then. It was the ravishing beauty that Wang Dong had created when they had used the Rainment of Light together.

That lady had looked very similar to Wang Dong, but she was very beautiful. Huo Yuhao couldn't forget her looks, just like the audience beneath the stage. It wasn't too far-fetched to claim that she was the dream of all men.

"Yuhao, how long have we known each other?" Wang Dong sounded a little resentful.

Huo Yuhao answered, "Almost three years. If we were still in the outer courtyard, we'd be in the fourth grade once this break ends."

Wang Dong nodded lightly, but had no intention of hugging less tightly. "Yes, three years! In these three years, I've always been with you except for the times that I returned home during the holidays. Yet, you'll be leaving for two and a half years this time. Will we still be like we are now after two and a half years?"

Huo Yuhao smiled and said, "Hugging just like this?"

“You!” Wang Dong suddenly let go of his arms and pushed him away. He snapped, “You know I’m not talking about that!”

Huo Yuhao was jolted when he saw Wang Dong’s teary face, “Wang Dong, our brotherhood won’t change. It could be two and a half years, or it could be twenty years. Once a brother, always a brother. It was our fate to become martial soul fusion skill partners. Our destinies will forever be intertwined.”

Chapter 153.3: A Farewell Between Bosom Friends

Wang Dong looked at him seriously, as if he was thinking of something, but hesitating. However, he didn’t continue.

Huo Yuhao looked at the weather outside and said, “It’s not early anymore. Let’s rest, I’ll be leaving early in the morning tomorrow. Let’s not cultivate today either. I’ll sleep here tonight; we haven’t slept together in a while.”

Wang Dong’s face turned crimson, “Who’s going to sleep with you? Scram.”

Huo Yuhao laughed and said, “Aren’t you happy? I don’t even remember how many times we’ve slept together. Anyway, I’m not going to leave. You can sleep on the floor.” As he spoke, he leapt onto Wang Dong’s bed before removing his shoes. Following that, he stripped and laid down.

Wang Dong watched his roguish look and found it funny, “Why are you so shameless?”

Huo Yuhao asked, “Don’t you want to sleep barefoot with me? I still remember the first time we slept like this. You’re still a clean freak after so many years.”

Wang Dong rolled his eyes and said, “Does my obsession with cleanliness bother you? Since when did you care so much about it?”

“Uhh... I’ve always respected you! Come on, I’ll leave some space for you.” As he spoke, Huo Yuhao shifted a little and patted the bed space beside him.

Wang Dong’s face turned red. However, Huo Yuhao didn’t notice, as it was getting dark outside, and the room wasn’t well-lit.

He turned around to put the Class 1 soul tool lamp that Huo Yuhao had made out, then stripped to his underwear. Following that, he walked towards the bed and laid down.

Huo Yuhao covered both of them with the blanket.

“What’re you doing?” Wang Dong sat up like a terrified little deer. “I have more blankets; I’ll go get another one.”

Huo Yuhao pulled his shoulder back and pressed him back onto the bed. He also tugged the blanket over him and said, “Enough, don’t be such a spoilsport. Let’s share the bed tonight. I’ll be leaving for two and a half years tomorrow. Let’s sleep together and have a good talk tonight, alright?”

The room had become completely black. The two of them were squeezed into a single bed, and their bodies were touching each other. Huo Yuhao felt that Wang Dong’s body was a little stiff. However, it

loosened up after he heard Huo Yuhao's words. He didn't insist on getting another blanket anymore either.

"Wang Dong, you're already fourteen. Sorry! I've been a little crazy during this period of time, and didn't celebrate your birthday with you." Wang Dong's birthday had passed in the three months that Huo Yuhao had gone mad.

Wang Dong snapped, "At least you still remember! Eldest senior and the rest celebrated it with me. Eldest senior, second senior, third senior, fourth senior, and fifth senior were all there. You were the only one missing."

Ever since Xu Sanshi and Jiang Nannan had joined the Tang Sect, there'd been a change in how the Shrek's Seven Monsters greeted one another. Bei Bei had proposed that they call each other based on their seniority.

Bei Bei was naturally the eldest, while He Caitou was the next. This was followed by Xu Sanshi and Jiang Nannan. Xiao Xiao had become Wang Dong's fifth senior. The youngest two were Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong. Huo Yuhao was the sixth oldest, while Wang Dong was the youngest.

"What birthday present do you want?" Huo Yuhao asked guiltily.

Wang Dong almost shook his head, but seemed to think of something and said, "Will you give me anything I want?"

Huo Yuhao laughed, "It has to be within my capability first!"

Wang Dong turned to face Huo Yuhao. They were in such close proximity that they could hear each other's breathing. Wang Dong was very fragrant, and had a child-like milky fragrance; even his breath held the scent. Huo Yuhao had a manlier smell, but it was one filled with youthfulness.

Wang Dong said, "Of course it's within your capabilities. Yuhao, you'll be nearly seventeen when you return in two and a half years. You won't be young anymore. You have to promise me one thing when that time comes. Take it as your birthday gift to me for this year."

Huo Yuhao chortled and said, "Why're you being so mysterious? You're even planning to only receive your gift then!"

Wang Dong chuckled and said craftily, "In case you forget me! Wait a minute, I think I'm going easy on you if it's only one thing. You'll also miss my fifteenth and sixteenth birthdays. That's three birthdays, so you owe me three things! Don't worry, you'll be able to fulfil all three things. Hurry up, let's hook our pinkies!" As soon as he finished speaking, he extended his right hand and wiggled his pinkie in front of Huo Yuhao. Although the room was very dark, Huo Yuhao could see his pinkie with his Spirit Eyes.

Huo Yuhao was a little amused. "You're a classic bully! I haven't agreed yet!"

"So are you going to agree?" Wang Dong said unyieldingly, "It's going to be two and a half years, and I didn't mind your stinky smell too. Can't you agree to such a small request?" Wang Dong's face turned a little red when he said this.

Huo Yuhao's heart softened, and he replied, "Okay, I promise. We're such close brothers. Don't mention three things, even if it were thirty things or three hundred things, I promise you that I'd do them for you. Are you satisfied now?"

Wang Dong was delighted, "Let's hook our pinkies."

Huo Yuhao helplessly extended his right pinkie and hooked it with Wang Dong's. But the two of them were so close that his hand touched Wang Dong's body.

He felt something very soft, yet very springy. Wang Dong's body shivered a little as he was touched, and he exclaimed furiously, "Watch out."

Huo Yuhao twisted his lips and said, "Your chest muscles aren't very impressive; they're soft. Mine are what you call firm."

"What nonsense." Wang Dong raged and sat up, but was immediately pulled back down into the bed by Huo Yuhao.

"Stop playing, didn't you want to hook pinkies? I won't cave in to you later."

Wang Dong seemed to be very bothered about the three things Huo Yuhao had promised him. He wanted to punish him for his recklessness, thus he extended his hand to tug at his pinkie with his own.

"Don't forget that you've promised me. You can't forget, no matter what. Do you understand?" Wang Dong emphasized with a domineering tone.

"Alright, alright. I know. You're already fourteen; why're you acting just like a little kid? You need to learn to be as mature as me." Huo Yuhao couldn't help but boast.

Wang Dong placed both his hands behind his back and said disdainfully, "Mature? You're the one who collapsed under such a small setback. Who's the one who went crazy for three months? Oh yeah, what did Elder Xuan say that made you return to normal? I don't believe that he simply convinced you."

Huo Yuhao didn't reply.

Wang Dong turned his body to lie on his side, "Tell me. Otherwise, I might have to get violent."

Huo Yuhao snorted and said, "Am I scared of you? If you can beat me, I'll tell you."

Wang Dong didn't really take action. He couldn't beat Huo Yuhao at such a close distance. He flipped his body over and laid down again. "Forget it if you're not going to say it."

The room went silent. Besides their breathing, no other sounds could be heard. But they both knew that the other was awake. The melancholy from Huo Yuhao's impending departure slowly spread through the air.

"Yuhao," Wang Dong suddenly said.

"What?"

Wang Dong's voice sounded hoarse, "I've changed my mind. You have to do one of the three things that you promised me first."

“What is it?” Huo Yuhao’s voice didn’t sound completely calm either.

Wang Dong said, “When you’re in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering academy, you have to prioritize your own body and not train so hard. No matter how much hope teacher and the academy have placed on you, you’re still only fourteen years old! You’ve already gone through so much; you might really collapse if you continue on like this.”

Huo Yuhao was silent for a brief moment, then sighed. “Wang Dong, you know we can’t back out at this point. The academy didn’t just expend money to nurture us. Over the past two years, the Soul Tool Department’s resources have been devoted to train me and second senior. We’ve also received pointers from the teachers at the Martial Soul Department. Have you forgotten the fact that teacher once mentioned that the continent won’t be peaceful much longer? I didn’t believe in the idea of destiny in this world previously. However, I started to believe in it when I obtained this Eye of Destiny. You, I, and Xiao Xiao all have twin martial souls, which is something completely innate! Can we avoid our destinies since we’re blessed with such circumstances? If we do try to avoid it, we’ll only continue to be ordinary for our entire lives. I don’t want to be ordinary.

“My goal hasn’t changed in all these years. However, I don’t want to be as reckless as I was before. At least I understand that I can’t involve innocent people in my revenge. In the end, I only have two enemies. One of them is the Duke’s wife, while the other is my father, the White Tiger Duke. Teacher once said that humans are innately kind; I believe in that. Dai Huabin may be flawed, but that’s a result of his upbringing under the Duke’s wife. I still want to take my revenge on him, but I no longer want to kill him. After all, he has similar blood flowing through his body, just like me and Dai Yueheng.

“Do you know why I’m so sad that teacher left? It’s because he was like a father to me. I’d always wanted a father who could guide me through life—ever since I was young! He was the one who taught me everything, and who dissolved my internal extremities. It was he who corrected my mindset and gave me so much guidance. Don’t worry, I won’t push myself so hard in the future. I’ll try my best and work hard. We’re fourteen years old; we’re no longer kids, but true youths now. Both of us have to work hard. Don’t lag too much behind me though.”

Wang Dong listened to Huo Yuhao’s words silently. He was internally shocked, and had an indescribable feeling. Huo Yuhao had really matured, and become much more rational and wise.

The night passed quietly. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong didn’t even know when they fell asleep. The simply knew that they chatted quite a lot that night...

Chapter 154: Im Leaving, Dont Cry

When Wang Dong woke up, the sun had already risen. Although he had gone to sleep late the previous night, he still slept very soundly.

He had spent many of his nights cultivating. He felt much more relaxed after sleeping through the night instead.

He wanted to laze in bed for the rest of the day! However, what time was it already?

His initial comfort turned to a flurry of emotions, jerking him up from his sprawling position.

He was the only one on the bed. The other side of the bed was empty, except for a sheet of paper.

Wang Dong snatched up the paper. There was only a single line of words on it: I've left. Don't cry. Wait for me to return.

"That rascal." Wang Dong jumped off from his bed and donned his outerwear. Before he even finished buttoning up, he had already opened his window and leapt out. A pair of bluish wings flapped open behind his back, flashing with a golden-yellow radiance as the sun shone on them.

He flapped his wings forcefully and flew rapidly towards the main gate of the academy.

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Huo Yuhao was very calm, and even wore a smile on his face. He had yet to obtain his fourth soul ring, but he could already use a flying-type soul tool with his Rank 40 soul power.

Wang Dong was sleeping very soundly at dawn, so Yuhao didn't wake him up. He was afraid of saying goodbye. Wasn't it good just like this? He had already bid his goodbyes the night before.

The other four members of Shrek's Seven Monsters sent him and He Caitou off. They were perplexed as to why Wang Dong didn't come. Huo Yuhao only laughed and joked that Wang Dong was crying in his dorm room.

Huo Yuhao turned and looked back in the direction of Shrek Academy. Huo Yuhao said in his heart, Shrek, Wang Dong, I'm leaving. Don't worry, I still remember that I owe you two things.

He had come to Shrek Academy at the age of eleven, and now he was already fourteen years old. His entire personality had transformed completely in these three years. Huo Yuhao was overwhelmed as he recalled his three years in the academy. What would the next two and a half years be like?

What would he be like two and a half years from now, when he returned from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy?

Everything was unknown.

Even if Elder Mu didn't insist on sending him to the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy then, he would have fought for this chance. Huo Yuhao became more and more interested in soul tools the more he learned about them. Furthermore, he could sense the difference between Shrek Academy and the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy in terms of soul tools. He was certain that the Judgement Sword that had caused Ma Xiaotao's martial soul to transform was something that Shrek Academy's teachers couldn't create even if they worked together.

The difference wasn't just in terms of valuable resources. More importantly, it was in terms of the concepts behind soul tools, and the amount of accumulated research.

Huo Yuhao and He Caitou chose two different paths even though they were both learning to create soul tools. Huo Yuhao was more focused on close-combat soul tools, and soul tools controlled by one's body. On the other hand, He Caitou was more into stationary soul tools, and especially stationary soul tool cannons. The stationary soul tool cannons that they had purchased from the Starlight Auction House had many uses.

Elder Mu once mentioned that he had snuck into the Sun Moon Empire for reconnaissance purposes before. Within the next thousand years, stationary soul tool cannons were bound to become the

strongest soul tools. That was because stationary soul tool cannons could fuse in more core formations regardless of their size, and use better materials without any restrictions.

When He Caitou realized that his talent in soul tools was incomparable to Huo Yuhao's, he decisively made a choice to focus on specific areas. Huo Yuhao also gave up learning about the creation of stationary soul tools after He Caitou made his choice. Both of them had their own targets to meet.

Over the past one and a half years, Huo Yuhao and He Caitou had made some progress in the Ultimate Soldier Plan. This progress wasn't just in terms of their cultivation, but also their knowledge of different aspects. Of course, they needed more time to digest the knowledge they had as they learned more. According to Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department's plan, these two and a half years would be the time for them to assimilate all their knowledge.

Yan Shaozhe was the one leading the group from Shrek Academy this time. Besides He Caitou and Fan Yu, there were eight other outstanding talents from Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department's inner courtyard that were coming on this trip.

Although the Soul Tool Department's inner courtyard disciples couldn't compare to the Martial Soul Department's inner courtyard disciples, they were still outstanding, having been nurtured by the Soul Tool Department. Furthermore, the students from Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department were originally from the Martial Soul Department. Their ability to get into Shrek Academy already proved that they weren't ordinary.

The Soul Tool Department inner courtyard disciples that were chosen this time were at least soul kings, and were at least Class 5 soul engineers. They would be pretty outstanding even in the Sun Moon Empire. Of course, Class 5 soul engineers from Shrek Academy couldn't compare to Class 5 soul engineers from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy.

Huo Yuhao and He Caitou flew at the back of the group. There was a Class 6 soul engineer badge on He Caitou's chest.

Soul engineer badges differed according to class. They all adopted the shape of a star anise, but the badges were blue for Class 1 to Class 3 soul engineers, which were differentiated using diamond-carved stars. The badges were purple for Class 4 to Class 6 soul engineers, black for Class 7 and 8 soul engineers, and red for Class 9 soul engineers. As there had never been a Class 10 soul engineer before, a Class 10 soul engineer badge didn't exist.

Huo Yuhao's badge was blue, and had three diamond-carved stars on it. He Caitou's badge was purple, and had six diamond-carved stars on it. This represented a huge gap between them.

Only He Caitou was aware that Huo Yuhao wasn't inferior to him, apart from creating stationary soul tools. It was just that Huo Yuhao's soul power was lacking. In addition, He Caitou even carried a few soul tools created by Huo Yuhao.

He Caitou had managed to reach Rank 50 just a month ago. He had obtained his fifth soul ring and become a soul king. As such, his Class 6 soul engineer title wasn't just for show.

It was also fitting for Huo Yuhao to wear a Class 3 soul engineer badge, since he had three soul rings. After all, a soul engineer's soul power rank and soul engineer class had a direct connection, even though it was possible to perform beyond one's class.

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Shrek Academy was situated at the southeast region of the Heavenly Soul Empire, while Maple Leaf City was at the southwest region of the Heavenly Soul Empire. The Sun Moon Empire could be reached by moving west to the border of the western territories. The flying distance was about twice the distance between Shrek City and Star Luo City.

The students had to rest every two hours due to their limited soul power. Yan Shaozhe didn't carry the rest like Elder Xuan had. They only arrived at their destination late in the afternoon.

Maple Leaf City was on the western side of the Star Luo Empire, near to its very active border with the Sun Moon Empire. Maple Leaf City handled a lot of the military logistics of the Heavenly Soul Empire. At the same time, it was an important trading and commercial city at the border. Even though it wasn't as prosperous as Shrek City, it wasn't inferior in terms of size.

After entering the city, Yan Shaozhe brought the students to find a hotel to stay in. He instructed them to rest well.

The eight students from the inner courtyard knew one another very well. He Caitou and Huo Yuhao were younger, and the academy also kept news of them a secret after they entered the Ultimate Soldier Plan, so the inner courtyard seniors didn't know much about them. However, He Caitou's Class 6 badge caught their attention. He Caitou hadn't entered the inner courtyard yet, and he was only seventeen years old.

There was another Class 6 soul engineer among the inner courtyard disciples apart from He Caitou. He was also the leader of the eight students. Yan Shaozhe announced a break, and this Class 6 soul engineer senior started to gesture for Huo Yuhao and He Caitou to join him.

The two of them looked at each other before stepping forward together.

"Senior, what instructions do you have for us?" The two of them greeted this Class 6 soul engineer respectfully.

This senior looked pleased with the both of them. He wore a smile on his face and said, "The two of you don't have to be so formal. We're all from the same academy. It's just that I've never seen either of you in the inner courtyard before. It seems like both of you are very talented, since you're both here in this exchange. Caitou, you're Teacher Fan Yu's disciple, if I'm not wrong. Oh yes, my name is Ye Xiaosheng. You can call me Brother Sheng."

"Brother Sheng." Huo Yuhao and He Caitou said respectfully.

Ye Xiaosheng nodded his head in satisfaction and said, "A snake cannot crawl without its head. We're all from Shrek, and this is a valuable opportunity. We have an important mission to carry out, too. If there's anything either of you need, you can come and find me."

He Caitou smiled and replied, "Thanks, Brother Sheng. You can also instruct us if there's anything that you want us to do."

Ye Xiaosheng was originally worried that He Caitou would snatch away his leadership role. He was much more relieved after this brief conversation. But he wouldn't make it difficult for He Caitou, either. After all, He Caitou was a Class 6 soul engineer too, and was also Fan Yu's inheriting disciple. He was fine as long as He Caitou didn't affect his leadership role.

"I don't think I'm in a position to instruct the both of you. Brother He, you don't have to stand on ceremony. The two of you should also rest after this long journey." After he finished speaking, Ye Xiaosheng waved goodbye before leaving.

He Caitou and Huo Yuhao stared at each other for a moment before smiling. After that, they returned to their rooms.

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Shrek Academy's students quickly finished packing on the second morning, and followed Yan Shaozhe and Fan Yu to Maple Leaf City's central plaza.

Huo Yuhao immediately recognized both Meng Hongchen and Xiao Hongchen, who were familiar foes. They were both seventeen years old now, and didn't look much different from adults. They were standing at the forefront of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's group. What stunned Huo Yuhao was that Jing Hongchen had come personally. The teacher that was leading them was Teacher Ma, the same teacher he'd seen during the tournament. Teacher Ma was also Ma Rulong's biological grandfather, and the chief of the Illustrious Virtue Hall.

The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy was determined this time. Not only did the Hongchen siblings come, but Huo Yuhao also spotted three of the preparatory team members from the tournament. Jing Hongchen appeared quite relieved.

Both parties met at Maple Leaf City's central plaza. The Hongchen siblings quickly located Huo Yuhao, who stood at the back of the group. When Xiao Hongchen saw Huo Yuhao's Class 3 badge on his chest, he instinctively pursed his lips and shot Huo Yuhao a provocative look.

The Hongchen siblings were still very indignant about having lost to Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong in the most critical battle during the tournament. They believed that it wasn't because of cultivation, but rather because their understanding of Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong was insufficient. In addition, Xiao Hongchen had been gravely injured back then.

Xiao Hongchen didn't regard Huo Yuhao as being on the same level as him, even though he had lost the tournament. His targets were soul emperors like Ma Xiaotao and Dai Yueheng.

Jing Hongchen said to Yan Shaozhe, "Greetings, Dean Yuan. I didn't expect that you'd be here personally today. It seems like your academy is treating this exchange quite seriously."

What kind of person was Yan Shaozhe? He was as calculating as Jing Hongchen. He wore a smile and replied, "Hallmaster Hongchen, aren't you personally here too? Apologies for not hosting you well when you came to Shrek Academy as a guest the other time."

Yan Shaozhe disliked Jing Hongchen. Although he didn't have proof, it was likely that Jing Hongchen was behind Ma Xiaotao's disappearance from Shrek.

Jing Hongchen's facial muscles cramped a little. His experience at the Sea God's Pavilion was too memorable. A Class 9 soul tool! He had lost such a soul tool to Shrek Academy; even the automatic Class 9 soul tools he'd brought had been confiscated by Shrek Academy. He'd suffered great losses! Yan Shaozhe was obviously adding salt to his wounds.

"I heard that Elder Mu has passed on. My condolences! It's a pity that it was our last time meeting then. He was the strongest and most deserving of respect among all the Titled Douluo that I've ever seen."

Yan Shaozhe received those words coldly. Elder Mu's death had been a huge blow to him. He replied, "Hallmaster Hongchen, let's cut the unimportant words. Since we already agreed to this earlier, let's exchange our students now. I'm representing Shrek Academy's Martial Soul Department in welcoming your students for this exchange."

Chapter 155: A Completely New World of Soul Engineering

When he heard Yan Shaozhe's words, Jing Hongchen's expression turned gloomy, but he smiled and said, "Alright."

"I didn't know Dean Yan was such a reliable person. I hope you can take good care of my students."

Yan Shaozhe laughed and said, "At least I can guarantee that the things they learn while they're at Shrek will be useful. Shrek Academy's inner courtyard will be open to them; I hope that Hallmaster Hongchen can reciprocate this sincerity during the exchange."

Jing Hongchen laughed and replied, "Of course. Your elite students will receive the best possible guidance in the Illustrious Virtue Hall."

Yan Shaozhe laughed slightly and said, "Since that's the case, let's make this a promise." He then lifted his right hand.

Jing Hongchen also lifted his palm and give Yan Shaozhe a high-five. The two of them laughed, but only they themselves knew what they were thinking.

The students from both academies switched positions under the guidance of the teachers. When Xiao Hongchen and Huo Yuhao brushed past each other, Huo Yuhao clearly heard Xiao Hongchen say, "In the next tournament, I'll personally be the one to crush your balls."

Huo Yuhao smirked. "I'm so scared."

They exchanged heated gazes, neither backing down from the challenge. However, unlike Xiao Hongchen, Meng Hongchen was in a good mood, which was quite a surprise to Huo Yuhao. She even had a smile on her face, and only nodded her head slightly when she saw him. Huo Yuhao didn't feel any contempt in her gaze, which left him a bit perplexed.

In fact, even Xiao Hongchen didn't know what his sister was currently thinking.

Meng Hongchen smiled and her face even turned a little red. She looked into the distance and thought to herself, He isn't a part of this exchange. Does that mean that he's in Shrek Academy? I wonder what

he looks like now; I bet he's even more handsome. I'm going to see him soon! His pinkish-blue eyes are really beautiful.

Apart from Yan Shaozhe and Jing Hongchen, everyone from both academies had switched positions.

Yan Shaozhe smiled gently and said, "Hallmaster Hongchen, I shall bid you farewell for now."

Jing Hongchen said, "Dean Yan, take care."

Their gazes met again, then Yan Shaoze flew up into the air. He didn't even need to use a flying-type soul tool. Rather, an invisible staircase seemed to be present in the sky and lead all the way up.

Under Teacher Ma's guidance, everyone from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy took out their flying-type soul tools and started to activate them. However, they were shocked when they saw Yan Shaozhe glide into the air. Was this the power of a Transcendent Douluo?

Jing Hongchen didn't rush to leave. He watched as Yan Shaozhe left with the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's students, somewhat pensive.

He could also fly on his own, since he was also a Titled Douluo. However, he couldn't do what Yan Shaozhe was doing. After all, Yan Shaozhe hadn't even used any soul power! Even though Elder Mu had passed on, Shrek Academy was still a powerhouse!

Jing Hongchen grinned and then turned around. He looked at Fan Yu and the Shrek Academy students before saying, "Guys, let's go. I'm the Hallmaster of the Illustrious Virtue Hall, Jing Hongchen. On behalf of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, I welcome you all."

Jing Hongchen also leapt up into the air once he'd finished speaking. Two thin streaks of golden light slowly rose behind his body.

Huo Yuhao observed the flying-type soul tool that he used carefully. It seemed like a pair of wings that was both very thin and very soft. The wings didn't appear to be made of metal at all. Even though the golden lights on the wings surged, no soul power could be felt from it. Jing Hongchen flapped his wings lightly and rose into the sky with ease.

Soul tools were usually made from metal, but what kind of metal could be described as soft? At most, metals were generally considered malleable, yet Jing Hongchen's flying-type soul tool actually gave off a feeling of softness.

Fan Yu was a Class 8 soul engineer himself, but his shock was even greater than Huo Yuhao's. He muttered to himself as he flew into the air, "The Illustrious Virtue Hall's research into soul tool bionics has reached such a level?"

Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department had developed rapidly over the past two years. However, Fan Yu could clearly sense the difference in quality between the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy and Shrek Academy. As far as soul tools go, the gap was exceedingly large!

Huo Yuhao couldn't help but ask, "Teacher, what do you mean by 'soul tool bionics'?"

Fan Yu said, "It refers to imitating the form of a living being with a soul tool. The soul tool will then adopt some of the common characteristics found in the being it's imitating."

Jing Hongchen's voice could be heard as soon as Fan Yu finished speaking, "Little fellows, we need to be quicker. Else we won't reach our destination before dark."

As he spoke, the flying-type soul tool behind him started to shine with golden light. It was like a golden screen of light had descended from the heavens, and they were all engulfed in it.

Some of the students attempted to resist out of surprise, but Fan Yu stopped them.

Afterwards, everyone started to move upwards. They realized that Jing Hongchen had expanded his flying-type soul tool a thousand times over, and engulfed them in the aforementioned film of light. They ended up behind Jing Hongchen's back, his more than ten meter-wide wings flapping lightly.

Jing Hongchen turned around and smiled at them. The golden light became even more intense soon afterwards, and the surrounding scenery began to blur.

Huo Yuhao groaned, only managing to stabilize himself with He Caitou's help, and then unleashed his Spiritual Detection to analyze the light film. However, attempting to do so ended with his spiritual power simply being shredded by the air current outside of the film. Luckily, he stopped his Spiritual Detection fast enough that he wasn't hurt.

Everything outside had become blurred, but even so, the students from Shrek Academy felt nothing; it was almost like they were in a quiet room. They couldn't even hear the sound of the wind outside. In fact, they might not have even realized that they were moving if it wasn't for the fact that they could see the scenery zooming by.

Fan Yu's expression hardened. He was well aware that Jing Hongchen was showing off, but he also understood that his flying-type soul tool was the highest calibre on the entire continent. The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's understanding of bionics must've reached a considerably high level, considering the fact that they were able to use it on flying-type soul tools. Conversely, Shrek Academy was still in the dark on soul tool bionics.

Elder Xuan had once carried everyone as he flew, but Jing Hongchen was on an entirely different level.

Huo Yuhao began to ponder as well. He'd discovered early on that streaks of golden light would shine near Jing Hongchen's back; they were most likely the soul tool's origin. But what about the film of light surrounding them? Had it also been formed through the soul tool with soul power?

No, definitely not.

Huo Yuhao reached out to touch it, and felt a smooth texture. He couldn't tell what it was made of, but he was certain that he'd never seen anything like it before.

Originally Huo Yuhao had been feeling down from his separation with Wang Dong, but now he was fascinated with this magical soul tool. For the next two and a half years, he would be learning in the same place that this soul tool had been made.

"Guys, are you alright?" Jing Hongchen's voice resonated through the light film.

Fan Yu nodded and said in awe, "Hallmaster Hongchen, your flying-type soul tool is quite impressive. I didn't expect your academy's research in this aspect to have reached such a level."

Jing Hongchen replied, "It's never enough. I won't consider it a major breakthrough until I can be within the light film at the same time as I pilot it. To be honest, even though this soul tool expended quite a lot of valuable resources, it was primarily made for research purposes. One goal of the Illustrious Virtue Hall is to create a flying-type soul tool that can carry many people without using too much soul power. Of course, we're hard at work in achieving this goal, but it's not something we can achieve in the short-term."

Fan Yu sighed and said, "At least your academy has a lofty goal like that. When that day comes, the masses will be able to fly across the continent with ease; everything will change."

Jing Hongchen laughed and said, "That might be possible many years from now, but I doubt I'll live to see it."

Fan Yu didn't know how much he was leaving out, but he was certain that the gap in technology between their academies was smaller than the gap in training their soul masters had.

Elder Mu decision to develop soul tools before he passed on was undoubtedly the correct decision, and the opportunity to pursue that goal was right in front of them.

The Sun Moon Empire's capital was called Sun Moon City or The Radiant City. It was the hub of the Sun Moon Empire's administration and economy. The city was very large, completely beyond what the Shrek Academy students had imagined.

Jing Hongchen only slowed down once they entered the Radiant City. When he did so, everyone could clearly see what was beneath them.

"We've already arrived in The Radiant City. All of you will live in this place for the next two and a half years. I hope that you all find it to your liking."

"The Radiant City is the pride of the Sun Moon Empire. I'm certain that even if one were to place Star Luo City, Heaven Dou City, and Dou Ling City together, they'd still be outclassed in size by The Radiant City."

It was already nightfall when they arrived, but the time only served to make the city appear more shocking. As Huo Yuhao looked down on the city, he could only see buildings in every direction; there didn't seem to be end to the city. The majority of the buildings were five stories tall, but some were more than ten. This was extremely rare in Shrek City and Star Luo City. However, this wasn't what caused the city to look shocking; many buildings were lit up, and shone brightly, like the stars in the sky.

Many large streets and avenues snaked between the buildings, some of which were as large as thirty meters in width. Huo Yuhao seemed to sense a soul power fluctuation amidst the bright lights.

Fan Yu couldn't help but ask, "Hallmaster Hongchen, why are there no city walls?"

Jing Hongchen replied, "The Radiant City doesn't need walls." His voice sounded very calm, yet was also full of assurance. His words were thought-provoking, but they didn't divulge any of the Sun Moon Empire's secrets.

Jing Hongchen led everyone as they flew towards the south. As they flew, Huo Yuhao noticed some star-shaped golden lights emerging from Jing Hongchen's flying-type soul tool and spreading outwards that seemed to maintain a special frequency.

Even though Huo Yuhao didn't know what the point of it was, but he knew it had to have a point. He quickly found the rhythm with his spiritual power, then recorded it.

Jing Hongchen's words weren't an exaggeration. While they weren't flying very fast, it still took them fifteen minutes to reach the Radiant City's southern edge. Huo Yuhao could tell that even if they really did combine all of the capitals, it would still be less than half the size of the city beneath them. While he might not have seen the Heavenly Dou Empire and Dou Ling Empire's capitals in person, he still knew that this was the case. This city's sheer scale left them in shock.

Not too far in front of them, a hexagonal region outlined by lights appeared. This region alone was comparable to a medium-sized city. There were several buildings inside of it, but the region mostly contained empty plots of land. Jing Hongchen informed everyone that this region was property of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy.

The golden light scattered, and Jing Hongchen landed with everyone in an enormous plaza. The light film dispersed, and the magical flying-type soul tool disappeared before any of them realized.

Some people were awaiting their arrival in the plaza and had come to welcome them. Among them, a short and plump middle-aged man walked towards Jing Hongchen and said respectfully, "Hallmaster, everything's been arranged."

Jing Hongchen smiled and said, "Let me introduce this man to you all. He's the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's teaching director, Lin Jiayi. All of you will be learning from him over the next two and a half years. Jiayi, please make the proper arrangements for these students. Teacher Fan Yu, please follow me."

Once he'd finished speaking, Jing Hongchen led Fan Yu somewhere else. Fan Yu didn't even look at Huo Yuhao or He Caitou as he left. As of this moment, the exchange had officially begun.

Lin Jiayi's face was as chubby as Jing Hongchen's, it was just younger looking. He waved his right hand, and the people behind him stepped forward. They each held a tray and stood in front of a different Shrek student.

"Welcome everyone, to the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. For the next two and a half years, each and every one of you will be considered students of our Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. To ensure the success of this exchange, we'll be providing you all with the best learning environments. As such, the Illustrious Virtue Hall will be open to you two days week. Additionally, you'll have the opportunity to take part in the Illustrious Virtue Hall's tests. If you manage to pass, you'll become members of the Illustrious Virtue Hall until the exchange is over.

Within these trays you'll find a map of the academy and the academy's handbook, as well as the keys to your room. As it's a bit late right now, the academy's teachers will conduct a few simple tests so that you can receive your proper uniforms tomorrow. Once your physical conditions have been recorded, you can find me if you need help with anything."

Everyone received their things, while Ye Xiaosheng cemented his role as their leader by stepping forward first. He Caitou and Huo Yuhao, along with the rest of the students, followed him. He Caitou and Huo Yuhao stayed near the back of the pack as they were led by the teachers to a nearby area.

As they walked, Huo Yuhao took out the map that he'd just received. The darkness didn't affect his vision much. The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy was much larger than Shrek Academy, even if one included Sea God's Island.

The map simply showed that the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy was divided into three regions—the teaching area, dormitories, and the testing area.

The testing area covered two-thirds of the academy, and many regions within the testing area were circled. Huo Yuhao could vaguely recall that there were many buildings within these regions, but their purposes weren't written on the map.

There was a particular region in the center of the testing area that was circled in red called the Illustrious Virtue Hall. While the Illustrious Virtue Hall was a part of the testing area, everyone present knew just what it meant to the Sun Moon Empire and their academy.

The teaching area and dormitory area had more details on the map. There were a total of twelve teaching blocks divided into six grades of students—two blocks for each grade. It was clear that the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy accepted far more students than Shrek Academy.

Elder Xuan had given them a brief overview of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy before they'd come, which included its students.

The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's six grades weren't classified by age. Instead, the requirements to join the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy were to be a Rank 10 soul master with at least one soul ring, and to not be over twelve years in age. However, age wasn't an important divider once one joined the academy.

In the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, one could enter the second grade when their abilities reached the standard of a Class 1 soul engineer. Following this rule, they would enter the third grade at Class 2. The learning atmosphere at the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy seemed to be much more relaxed than Shrek Academy's, as there were only tests to determine the grade of a soul engineer. Of course, the soul engineer tests given at the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy were much different than the tests given out at Shrek Academy, but Huo Yuhao was unsure how this difference would manifest.

There was still a cut-off point in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. If one was unable to become a Class 3 soul engineer by the time they turned eighteen, they'd have to leave the academy and fend for themselves. But if one could live up to their standards and become a Class 5 soul engineer by twenty-five, then they'd qualify to enter the Illustrious Virtue Hall. Similarly, if they didn't reach Class 5 by twenty-five, then they'd have to leave.

At this point, the teachers brought Huo Yuhao and the others to a school building for first-grade students.

The building was massive, and the vast corridors extended far into the distance. Lin Jiayi informed everyone that the quantity of students in each grade varied a lot because of the promotional criteria in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. There were thirty-two classes of forty students each in the first grade, which fell by a third once one entered the second grade. The sixth grade students, on the other hand—all of whom Class 5 soul engineers—were no longer separated into classes, and all cultivated together in order to prepare for the Illustrious Virtue Hall's tests.

Huo Yuhao noticed that there were many soul tools all throughout the school building, all of which looked exquisite. While he could tell what some of them were used for, most of them he couldn't.

Lin Jiayi brought them all the way to the end of the first level and stopped in front of a room. There was a sign on the door that read 'Measurement Room.'

Lin Jiayi retrieved a badge from his neck and placed it in front of a circular, disc-like object embedded in the door.

A beep sounded, and the metal door silently opened to both sides. Lin Jiayi then led everyone inside .

The room wasn't very big, only around a hundred square meters in size. Inside, there were several large-scale soul tools.

There were some large-scale soul tools inside Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department's testing area, but they were mainly used for handling metal, sculpting, and punching holes during the process of creating other soul tools. However, the large-scale soul tools here were much more compact, and soul power undulations they emitted were much stronger.

Lin Jiayi clapped his hands, attracting everyone's attention to him. "This is the academy's measurement room. All students must complete their physical measurements here. Don't worry, the soul physique measuring scale won't do any harm to your body. Now then, I'll need all of you to temporarily put your soul tools away to prevent any interference. Pass your storage-type soul tools to your friends first, then ensure that there's no other metals on your bodies."

Chapter 156: Entering School and Taking Measurements

Huo Yuhao nodded and relaxed. He had already made up his mind. If they wouldn't let him stay low-profile, then he was going to let them see true brilliance.

The golden light in his eyes faded away. After a detailed analysis of the of the soul physique measuring scale from up close, Huo Yuhao had managed to record its entire structure in his head, including the development of its formation arrays.

Huo Yuhao had already started to absorb the spiritual power in the Skydream Iceworm's second seal as his cultivation increased. Even Elder Xuan wasn't aware of this information, but Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection not only could improve in the range of its detection, it could also improve in its intensity. With his current cultivation, he could memorize the structure and formation arrays of a Class 6 soul tool not in use with his Spiritual Detection. This was his 'lethal weapon' in coming to the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. These records would be very important the future development of Shrek's soul tool department. This soul physique measuring scale was his first target for today.

Huo Yuhao was certain that the soul physique measuring scale was a Class 6 soul tool through his detection and observation of its formation arrays. He didn't find any problems, and he had completely recorded the information on this soul physique measuring scale. As he stepped up to the soul physique measuring scale, he completed his record of its formation arrays.

However, the amount of complicated information was too great to be memorized in the long-term. Huo Yuhao could at best commit it to memory for two hours before he'd forget it. So he had to draw what he could recall as soon as possible, or cement his memory even further.

Huo Yuhao's spiritual power was depleted by almost ten percent just like that.

The white light from the soul physique measuring scale lit up and scanned him from the top down. Huo Yuhao squinted as he retracted his spiritual power.

"Physical strength—Rank 62. Physical tenacity—Rank 68. Soul power undulation—Rank 40. Height—1.80 meters. Weight—74 kilograms. Left arm length... Age—14. Added left and right arm bones. Final evaluation..."

The series of numbers in front of them left everyone around shocked. The entire measurement room was in pin-drop silence.

Even though He Caitou was evaluated to be a soul king based on the statistics that popped out, everyone was stunned to see Huo Yuhao's age and Rank 40 soul power.

What did his Rank 40 soul power signify? It meant that he had yet to become a four-ringed soul ancestor. That being the case, then Huo Yuhao must be a soul elder, but he was a soul elder that had obtained over Rank 60 in more than one measurement. Besides lagging behind He Caitou in physical strength, he matched him in others. Most importantly, he had three soul bones, which was more than He Caitou!

"Beep, beep, beep, beep..." Weird sounds came from the soul physique measuring scale. The teacher in charge of recording results was stunned. He said, "The numbers are a mess, the soul physique measuring scale has malfunctioned... Monster, this guy's a monster."

When he looked at Huo Yuhao again, his eyes even showed traces of shock and fear.

Huo Yuhao scanned him calmly. He stepped off the soul physique measuring scale and said gently, "I'm from Shrek Academy. The academy has another name: Monster Academy. Our school motto is: We only nurture monsters, not ordinary people. Thanks for your compliment."

Ye Xiaosheng was shocked as he looked at Huo Yuhao returning to He Caitou's side. He couldn't help but mutter to himself, "There should be another measurement—for arrogance..."

Lin Jiayi swallowed and looked at Huo Yuhao, astonished. He didn't know what to say.

He'd seen many talented students in his role as the continent's top soul engineering academy's teaching director. But he had to admit that Huo Yuhao had one of the most abnormal body conditions he'd ever seen. Xiao Hongchen and Meng Hongchen couldn't even compare to him!

When they were his age, both Xiao Hongchen and Meng Hongchen had better soul power ranks. However, their physical strengths paled in comparison. Fortunately, Huo Yuhao's soul power wasn't very

great, it might've been shocking to see a soul king at age fourteen. Lin Jiayi tried to keep himself composed, he nodded at Huo Yuhao and smiled. "Little fellow, your body is quite strong indeed! No wonder you're in Shrek Academy." He complimented. Before this Huo Yuhao didn't catch his attention. He caught a glimpse of Huo Yuhao's Class 3 soul engineer badge and sighed in relief, at least Huo Yuhao's soul engineer class was normal.

Lin Jiayi said, "Alright, we still have two more tests to do. We don't have much time left, so let's move it along. Allow me to introduce the subject of the second test. This test will measure your strength. You can't use soul tools for the test, but you can use soul power to boost your strength. Strength is vital to a soul engineer, necessary to control large-sized soul tools."

The soul strength measuring scale. It was larger than the soul physique measuring scale, taking up around ten percent of the room. There was a striking point covered in leather within the soul strength measuring scale, this striking point was a square meter in size. No-one from Shrek Academy knew what this soul tool was made of. The strength test was very simple—one just needed to hit the striking point with all their might. Evaluations were determined in terms of soul power rank, in line with the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's evaluating standards.

"Boom——"

"Boom——"

.....

Dull booms sounded repeatedly. These Shrek Academy students didn't excel in this test. After all, they were from the Soul Tool Department and were more focused on increasing their soul powers. Even their soul rings were focused on increasing their soul powers. None of them were evaluated above Rank 60 in this test, including Ye Xiaosheng.

It was He Caitou's turn again!

He Caitou and Huo Yuhao looked at each other. They didn't need use words to understand what the other was thinking.

He Caitou walked up to the soul strength measuring scale and took in a deep breath. He compared the size of his fist to the striking point. Just as everyone thought he would punch the striking point, he suddenly shouted, "I have a large cigar!"

"Bam!"

Ye Xiaosheng slipped and fell to the floor. His head even hit the side of the soul strength measuring scale. Everyone stiffened up suddenly as they saw He Caitou holding his large cigar. He stuffed the cigar in his mouth and lit it with a speck of flame before taking in a deep breath.

Strength-Amplifying Large Cigar! This was He Caitou's second soul skill.

"Student, you can't smoke in the academy..."

As a teacher tried to warn him, He Caitou's eyes shot open. He brought his left foot forward and punched out with his right fist, striking the soul strength measuring scale before him.

“Bang——” A huge tremor spread, the entire room seemed to shake because of this fist. The numbers on the soul strength measuring scale quickly changed, and the scale even shifted more than three inches from its original position.

“Strength—Rank 70.” The teacher that was in charge of recording muttered the staggering number out. It was pertinent to note that this soul strength measuring scale could only record soul power up to Rank 70! This Rank 70 limit was set using a strength-type soul master as a benchmark.

He Caitou shook his fist and jumped off of the soul strength measuring scale leisurely. He took out the cigar from his mouth and breathed out a swirl of smoke. He spoke to the teacher that warned him, “Sorry! Didn’t mean to violate academy regulations on purpose. I’m a food-type soul master, the cigar is my martial soul. Teacher, do you wanna try my large cigar? How about my thick cigar?” He stretched his waist as he spoke.

The teacher quickly rejected him. He was still completely stunned by He Caitou’s strength. To teaching director Lin Jiayi’s knowledge, no one else in the room but him could reach the limit on the soul measuring scale.

He Caitou’s strength was comparable to a soul beast’s. At Rank 50 soul power he could actually unleash such a powerful force, whereas even an assault-type soul king with many enhancements from soul skills might not be able to reach such force.

Huo Yuhao was the last to take the test. He had many things to consider at the moment. Should he go all-out? Should he hide his power? This soul strength measuring scale wasn’t as thorough as the soul physique measuring scale. With his age, he had no doubt that no-one could see through his bluffs if he held back a bit. However, that previous test had revealed some of his figures, if he tried too hard to conceal his strength he might arouse suspicions. After a moment’s thought, Huo Yuhao knew what to do.

He took a deep breath while he stepped onto the soul strength measuring scale. Huo Yuhao lifted his right arm slowly, mimicking the action of hitting the striking point.

All the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy teachers focused their attention on him. After all, they’d been shocked by his previous test.

Huo Yuhao suddenly took in another deep breath. He gave off the impression that he was sucking all the air in the room into his lungs. He made a fist with his right hand, and pulled it back a foot before striking out!

“Thud——” Huo Yuhao’s strike was much more underwhelming compared to He Caitou’s. The sound it made was also the softest among the ten students present.

“Strength—Rank 55!” The teacher in charge of recording their results shouted another shocking number once again.

Huo Yuhao was only average amongst the ten students despite his Rank of 55. However, as he was only fourteen years old, this was actually an extraordinary result. Furthermore, he’d released his strength using a different method than the others; he’d managed to unleash such a powerful force even though

he was only a foot away. His strike hadn't made much sound, which further demonstrated his technique. He hadn't wasted any strength at all.

Huo Yuhao hadn't used any soul skills to enhance his body either. The only thing he'd relied on was his own personal strength and a little of the Tang Sect's Controlling Crane Capturing Dragon. He was quite satisfied with his strength evaluation; it was neither too high nor too low. With this, he'd pass the test without drawing too much attention to himself. If he'd used the Ice Empress' Pincer and Mysterious Jade Hands, the result would've been completely different.

After the strength test ended, everyone proceeded to the last segment. This time, it was a reaction speed test.

The measuring scale was much smaller this time. It was a squarish platform that held sixteen boxes, each of which were the size of a fist. These boxes would light up at random, after which one was supposed to slap the lit boxes in order to deactivate them. The test would end when one box was missed.

This test had nothing to do with one's abilities; it was a simple test of one's reaction speed and the coordination between one's mind and body.

Ye Xiaosheng didn't act as arrogant as he had before when they arrived. The two tests that they'd just taken had revealed how inferior he was to He Caitou. The only lead he had was his soul rank. Although he didn't think that he'd lost face, he still felt a bit awkward.

The last test was like a game. In the beginning, Ye Xiaosheng wasn't very bothered by the test, and even became slightly complacent. However, he paid the price for his complacency very quickly.

When the test started, the boxes only lit up one by one and remained lit for around a third of a second. If one hit the boxes before the time was up, they'd pass and the test would continue.

Ye Xiaosheng managed to breeze through the test while the boxes lit up one by one. However, a pair of boxes lit up after a while, which temporarily stunned Ye Xiaosheng. He managed to hit one of them, but he was slightly too slow to reach the other.

With this, his test was over.

"Reaction—slow." When the teacher in charge of recording the results gave him this evaluation, Ye Xiaosheng felt like hiding himself in a hole.

The rest of the students learned from Ye Xiaosheng's mistake and were much more cautious. Even though they were all inner courtyard disciples from the Soul Tool Department, they had still once been part of the Martial Soul Department. Shrek Academy often trained the reactive abilities of their students, thus they weren't too bad at it.

When He Caitou's turn came, he fully demonstrated his great reaction speed and managed to survive for five full minutes. It was only when eight boxes lit up at the same time that he couldn't react in time.

Huo Yuhao was the last to take the test. He was rather curious about how the test functioned. However, he found it difficult to focus. While the others had been taking the test, he'd attempted to memorize the

structure and formation arrays of the three measuring scales using his spiritual power, which had depleted him greatly.

This caused him to be eliminated rather quickly. He only managed to reach six boxes, thus his reaction speed was evaluated as average.

“Alright, the tests will end here. The teachers will bring you all to your dormitory in a little while. The academy has arranged a single room along with a washroom for each of you. I hope that all of you like this place for the next two and a half years. Your uniforms will also be delivered tomorrow.”

The dorm area was located behind the teaching area, and was much larger than Shrek Academy’s. The map clearly detailed the various amenities in this area. Huo Yuhao was extremely interested in a place called the auxiliary cultivation room. However, it looked like an exorbitant fee had to be paid in order to use it.

They were all allocated rooms on the top floor of the sixth-grade dormitory region. The floor was rather quiet, and just like Lin Jiayi had mentioned, they’d each been allocated a twenty square meter dorm room equipped with a washroom. Even though their rooms weren’t luxurious, they were still neat and tidy, and were better than the dorm rooms at Shrek Academy.

However, Huo Yuhao had no energy to deal with any of this right now. The moment he entered his room, he quickly locked his door and walked to one side. A golden light flashed from his forehead, and his third eye slowly opened.

He shut his other two eyes, then solely used his Eye of Destiny to observe the world around him. He unleashed his Spiritual Detection, which reached a nuanced state under the influence of the Eye of Destiny. Even the smallest dustmite wouldn’t escape his detection.

The entire process lasted for about a minute. When his Eye of Destiny finally shut, Huo Yuhao couldn’t help but nod his head in satisfaction. The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy hadn’t installed any monitoring devices in their rooms, which could be considered quite magnanimous.

He didn’t dare to delay any longer, and quickly sat in front of a table in the room. He retrieved a paper and pen from his storage-type soul tool and then started to record the details of the three soul tools that he’d seen.

This was Huo Yuhao’s huge responsibility. He was aware that by recording the structure and formation array of every single soul tool that he saw, he was helping Shrek Academy improve.

The structure of a soul tool was rather complex, hence he couldn’t make any mistakes in his recording. The soul physique measuring had been the most advanced of the three soul tools that he’d seen today, followed by the soul strength measuring scale. They were Class 6 and Class 5 soul tools respectively. The last soul tool had only been Class 4, and was much simpler than the other two.

Their complex structures and formation arrays were slowly recorded by Huo Yuhao. He took two hours to record everything, and even included his own evaluation of the three soul tools.

Huo Yuhao also managed to develop a deeper understanding of them as he recorded their structures and formation arrays. He sighed when he realized that they weren’t even the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy’s greatest works. However, he could already sense the enormous gap between

Shrek Academy and the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. Despite the deeper understanding he'd gleaned from them, Huo Yuhao could barely understand a third of the three soul tools he'd just recorded. Yet, according to Shrek's standard, he was already at the level of a Class 6 soul engineer!

Despite his large quantity of spiritual power, he was still fatigued once he'd finished writing, thus he went to his bed to meditate.

"What's the situation like?" Jing Hongchen asked Lin Jiayi.

Lin Jiayi said, "The most outstanding of them is He Caitou. His strength has reached Rank 70. Furthermore, he stated that he was a food-type soul master, and his martial soul should be a cigar. His body has reached the level of a soul emperor despite him only being a soul king. He ranked first in all three tests."

"What about Huo Yuhao?" Jing Hongchen asked.

Lin Jiayi answered, "He's quite extraordinary. During the physique test, his strength and tenacity were rather outstanding. His reaction speed was normal, however. I observed him carefully, and I don't believe that it was intentional. Furthermore, he actually has three soul bones. When our soul physique measuring scale tried to analyze them, the numbers got messed up. I thus suspect that he has an external soul bone. He's not like a soul engineer, but more like a talented soul master. His soul power has reached Rank 40, yet he hasn't obtained his fourth soul ring to attain a breakthrough yet. This is also quite suspicious."

Jing Hongchen smiled and said, "That's normal; Huo Yuhao is from Shrek's Martial Soul Department. He's mainly here as collateral. However, we can't underestimate him. After all, he's still Elder Mu's personal disciple. My sources claim that he's an orphan, and that his background is unclear. Continue to observe their movements. During class, try to pay attention to He Caitou. I'll send someone else to watch Huo Yuhao."

Lin Jiayi asked, "Hallmaster, do we...?"

Jing Hongchen shook his head and said, "There's no need to. Just follow the normal procedures. The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy can't go back on its word. So what if they manage to learn? The gap between our academies in terms of soul tools is simply too great; it can't be closed with just a few exchange students. They won't possibly be able to figure out our core secrets either. More importantly, Shrek is only an academy. However, we're the research facility of the Sun Moon Empire. With the Dragon God Douluo Mu En dead, the continent will belong to the Sun Moon Empire within twenty years. The Douluo Continent will be renamed to the Moon Continent when that happens." When he reached this point, an excited look flashed through his eyes.

Lin Jiayi acknowledged his words respectfully and then retreated.

"Jiayi, wait a minute."

"Yes, do you have any other instructions?" Lin Jiayi asked.

Jing Hongchen asked, "How's the progress on Plan One?"

Lin Jiayi said, "It's a little problematic. The main problem lies in the formation arrays. Based on our design, even a Titled Douluo runs the risk of having his soul crushed by the intense spiritual shock of the formation arrays. That is, unless we can find a spiritual-type Titled Douluo to try it, which will give us a thirty percent chance of success. Hallmaster..." As he reached this point, he seemed a little hesitant to speak.

"What?" Jing Hongchen squinted, "What do you want to say? Tell me. Don't tell me that I'll blame you if you tell me what you want to say."

Lin Jiayi replied, "Yes. Hallmaster, I've always reckoned that Plan One is proceeding too quickly. Even if our research is successful, we won't be able to form a proper military that's big enough. But we have expended a lot of human resources, material resources, and money on Plan One. I believe that our chances of success will be greater if we lower our standards. After all, forming a large-scale force is scarier than creating a top-ranked military force."

Jing Hongchen furrowed his brow and replied, "I've never considered that before. However, the chance of success is still very low even if we lower the standards. The key lies in the design of the formation arrays. I've always emphasized high standards because they can be extended to other aspects if they're achieved, which will increase our probability of success in other areas. It seems like we're rushing too much. Pass on my instructions – allow the Class 9 soul engineers to rest for a few days. I must consider the future of Plan One before proceeding. Let them work their brains too.

"Whoever has a good idea must inform me immediately."

Lin Jiayi was delighted when he saw that Jing Hongchen had listened to his advice. "Hallmaster, you are indeed wise."

Jing Hongchen laughed, "Wise my foot. I've been under a lot of pressure because of Plan One, and His Majesty has asked me about it a couple of times. We need to hand something up soon. Otherwise, I believe his patience will become limited."

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Huo Yuhao's three eyes opened together, and he watched as the sun rose. He let out a refreshed breath, and a gust of white fog came out from his mouth. It slowly took shape and surrounded his body. As he breathed in again, the fog turned into two streaks of white gases that entered into his body through both of his nostrils. The entire room was filled with a clear aura.

Although there weren't any plants, there was a strong sense of life.

His fatigue ceased to exist after a few hours of meditation. Huo Yuhao's improvements in the Mysterious Heaven Technique were slow but steady.

He wasn't in a rush to obtain his fourth soul ring. He had enough soul skills, unlike other lower-level soul masters who possessed limited soul skills. His first soul ring had given him four useful spiritual-type soul skills. He also had two other soul skills from the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion, as well as five soul skills from his four soul bones. Even a soul sage might not have as many soul skills as he did!

If he absorbed another soul ring he could increase his own power and add another soul skill. Furthermore, he had also realized after he added his third soul ring that his spiritual-type martial soul

needed some luck in finding a suitable soul ring. That was why he wasn't rushed at all, and instead calmly focused on increasing his own cultivation. He also aimed to improve his knowledge on soul tools over the next two and a half years, and enhance his own abilities. In addition, he also aimed to steal the research results of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy!

He took in three more deep breaths and adjusted his soul power. Huo Yuhao felt a warmth coming from his body. He shut his Eye of Destiny and it disappeared. The light within his Spirit Eyes also slowly faded away. While he was only fourteen years old, when he placed his hands behind his back he already looked very mature.

Every dormitory block in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy had its own canteen. The higher the grade, the nicer the food in the canteen of the dormitory block. Huo Yuhao and the others stayed in the sixth-grade dormitory block, which meant that the food in the canteen there was the best.

However, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy couldn't compare to Shrek Academy in terms of its food. Huo Yuhao and He Caitou had been enjoying delicacies in Shrek Academy over the past two years. The food here in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy was too plain for their liking.

Huo Yuhao and He Caitou met Fan Yu in the canteen.

"How are the two of you feeling?" Fan Yu wore a slight smile as he looked at the both of them.

He Caitou laughed bitterly, "The gap is really huge."

Huo Yuhao nodded.

Fan Yu smiled and said, "We wouldn't be here if there wasn't a gap. Everything here regarding soul engineers is worth learning. I spoke with the Hallmaster of the Illustrious Virtue Hall yesterday. They're more sincere than I thought they would be. Just do your best to learn and don't worry about other things. The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy won't do anything to the both of you before these two and a half years are up. As for how much you'll learn, that depends on you."

Huo Yuhao didn't mention the fact that he had recorded the three soul tools. There were too many people around, and it was best to be prudent.

The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's efficiency was indeed great. After they finished their breakfast and returned to their rooms, their uniforms had already been delivered. They were also told to gather at the first level of the sixth-grade teaching block.

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The sixth-grade teaching block was not smaller than the first-grade teaching block that they saw yesterday. However, they knew that there were only a handful of students in the sixth grade. These students were at least Class 5 soul engineers. What could they do by occupying two huge teaching blocks?

The teaching director, Lin Jiayi, was already waiting here. There were ten teachers of various ages standing behind him.

“Students from Shrek, you’ll be learning from our teachers from today onwards. I hope that you’ll treat this as your room for the next two and a half years. To facilitate your learning of more advanced soul tool knowledge, your learning arrangements will be as follows...

“All of you will follow the ten sixth-grade teachers who are standing behind me now. They are the most capable teachers in the academy. They’re all at least Class 7 soul engineers. Each of them is in charge of a few sixth-grade students.

“The sixth-grade testing area will be open to all of you, too. All the materials that you need for experiments will be provided by the academy. Of course, you’ll need to pay a certain fee for the materials if you want to bring the soul tools that you’ve created back with you. However, the experiments will be completely free.

“In the first month, you’ll all be learning here. Once you possess a certain foundation, you’ll take a test administered by a teacher from the Illustrious Virtue Hall. The results of that test will determine your frequency of participation in the Illustrious Virtue Hall’s lectures and practicals. The best you can achieve is to enter the Illustrious Virtue Hall directly to learn. The worst is that you’ll only be able to enter once every ten days. You’ll also be offered the opportunity to take the test again as you learn. As long as the results of your test are satisfactory, your time in the Illustrious Virtue Hall will be increased.”

“Principally, the academy doesn’t wish for any of you to leave unnecessarily. That’s because we can’t guarantee your personal safety outside of the academy. As exchange students, we’ll be heavily accountable if anything happens to any of you. That’s why it’s important for you to apply for leave and report to me if you want to leave the academy for leisure purposes. You’ll need to sign an indemnity form, too. Basically, that is all. If there are any questions, you can ask your assigned teacher directly, or you can find me.”

Lin Jiayi explained the future learning process to Shrek’s students. Besides the Illustrious Virtue Hall’s test that caught Huo Yuhao’s attention, he was also piqued that they were all going to be separated. There were ten teachers standing behind Lin Jiayi, meaning that each one of them would take one student.

“To ensure fairness, the teachers will use a lot-drawing method to choose which student they’ll be guiding. The lot-drawing will start now.”

As he spoke, Lin Jiayi received a tray from one of the working crew. There were folded pieces of paper on the tray. The ten teachers streamed towards the tray and each took a piece of paper.

The first teacher to draw his lot was the youngest among the ten teachers. He appeared to be around thirty or so, and was even younger than Fan Yu.

“Huo Yuhao.” He read out the name on his piece of paper.

Huo Yuhao’s brow furrowed a little, but he still walked out quickly. He replied, “Present!”

This young teacher looked very cold. After seeing Huo Yuhao’s Class 3 soul engineer badge, he said coldly, “Follow me.” After he finished speaking, he turned around and walked away. He didn’t wait for the other teachers.

Huo Yuhao didn't say anything else, and followed him out. He proceeded to the second teaching block of the sixth grade as he followed this young teacher.

He had furrowed his brow earlier because this teacher was too young. He was capable of becoming a Class 7 soul engineer even though he was only thirty or so years old. However, he should be placing all his focus and energy on his cultivation and research on soul tools at such an age. Could he teach well? Furthermore, he could sense that this teacher didn't like him. That's because the teacher also furrowed his brow when he saw Huo Yuhao.

"I hope that I can learn something from him," Huo Yuhao sighed. He had hoped for an older teacher.

Chapter 157: An Oath Made by a High-Five

That thirty or so year-old teacher went up the stairs inside the second block of the sixth grade. This classroom block was six stories high, and he brought Huo Yuhao to the fifth before they turned down a corridor. They walked down it a few dozen meters until the teacher stopped before a door.

There was a tag on the door that read '3rd Laboratory.'

He's already taking me to the lab? Huo Yuhao had some doubts in his mind when he saw where they were. However, he didn't have any control over what he was going to learn while he was here.

The young teacher took out a nameplate from his pocket and waved it in front of the door. A similar sight to what Huo Yuhao had seen at the measuring room yesterday presented itself—a single beam of light flashed, followed by the door opening.

"Come in." The young teacher's voice was simple and pithy as he led Huo Yuhao into the lab.

The lab was extremely large and spacious; it was larger than Fan Yu's lab in Shrek Academy. There were all sorts of soul tools and metallic materials on display, while the gigantic lab desk was more than thirty square meters in size. The matte, silverish-white metallic surface was squeaky clean, and gave off a pleasant sensation.

The lab was empty save for them; nobody else was around. The young teacher said in an uninterested manner, "My name's Xuan Ziwen, and I'll be your teacher from today onwards. I don't care what the assessment rank you've received from Shrek Academy is; you'll have to retake my tests from the very beginning. If you can't pass my assessments, you'll have independent learning in the library so that you don't waste my time."

Huo Yuhao was taken aback. He'd never expected this teacher to say something like this; he didn't want to teach him?

Huo Yuhao couldn't help but ask, "Teacher Xuan, is every teacher in charge of the exchange students like you?" It would spell immense trouble for them if this was the case. He was confident that he'd be able to learn something by himself in the library, but he knew from his experiences with Fan Yu that there were some topics that one would have to ponder for several days to understand alone, rather than being able to simply resolve it in just a few minutes with a teacher's help.

Xuan Ziwen didn't seem to react to Huo Yuhao's jibe, and he replied coldly, "I don't care how others act; this is just how I do things. My schedule is tight, so if you find this unfair, go and take your dispute to Lin

Jiayi and request a change of mentorship. I didn't want to take this responsibility anyway, so I'm telling you what choices you have."

Huo Yuhao thought about Zhou Yi when he gazed into the coldness in Xuan Ziwen's eyes. Teacher Zhou's strictness and fierceness was different, but learning under Zhou Yi gave Huo Yuhao some experience with teachers who had strange personalities. Teachers with characters meant they had standards, and tests were just tests anyway – how could he be afraid of assessments?

Huo Yuhao tempered his emotions momentarily before he gave his answer. "I'm willing to take your assessment."

Xuan Ziwen's calm but cold eyes flowed with a strange emotion, and he shot a mildly surprised glance at Huo Yuhao and said, "Alright, then let's begin. The badge on your chest should represent a Class 3 soul engineer from Shrek Academy. I'll give you fifteen minutes – you can select from any of the materials here, and you will forge your best Class 3 soul tool formation arrays for me. It's not about how low your class is, it's about a soul engineer's thoughts and his or her creativity. This is my only prompt for you – you may begin."

With that, Xuan Ziwen stepped to one side. He flipped his wrist, and a small timer appeared in his hands. Fifteen minutes were entered, and he placed it on the lab desk after starting the countdown.

Huo Yuhao started on his work as soon as possible. Ever since he had joined the Ultimate Soldier Plan, he had simply put in too much effort. However, he was still a fourteen-year-old teenager after all. He had passed his soul physique measurement with flying colors, and an arrogant flair rose from his heart after he received Xuan Ziwen's neglect and indifference.

He walked towards the metallic materials before him. He didn't even bother inspecting them closely, but instead immediately activated his Spiritual Detection and perceived everything in his mind. He raised his right hand, and five dark golden blades protruded from his fingertips. He swung his hand gently, and sliced off the corner of a bright silver chunk of metal.

Huo Yuhao raised his left hand, used the Controlling Crane Capturing Dragon technique, and this piece of metal was securely in his grasp. He withdrew the Darkgolden Terrorclaw, and diamond ice crystals suddenly appeared on both of his hands. He placed his hands together and gradually kneaded the metal piece that he had just shaved off.

Xuan Ziwen gasped in surprise when he first saw the Darkgolden Terrorclaw. He was already more than thirty years old, but he had been immersed in soul tools for more than twenty years, and he could clearly tell that Huo Yuhao wasn't using a soul tool. The metal that he had chosen was the notoriously tough and hard titanium – it was a rare metal that was only produced within the Sun Moon Empire. Xuan Ziwen's first impression when he chose titanium was: did he make a mistake?

However, his pupils immediately contracted when the dark golden blade swiped across the silver-white titanium chunk and effortlessly chopped a piece off without even making a single sound. His brain started to work quickly as he attempted to calculate the dark golden blade's sharpness and toughness.

What shook Xuan Ziwen even more was what came after. A series of crackling sounds could be heard from between Huo Yuhao's palms, and a fine silver-white powder started drifting down from his hands. The diamond ice crystals looked incredibly brilliant as they reflected the light from inside the lab.

Huo Yuhao came before the lab desk without giving Xuan Ziwen a chance to deliberate. His demeanor changed a little as well, and Xuan Ziwen could subtly feel Huo Yuhao's otherworldly focus and stability – a silver-white sphere that was about as large as a lychee appeared on the table.

He... He used his hands to knead titanium into a sphere? Xuan Ziwen was in awe once more. He hadn't collected any of Huo Yuhao's assessment details and particulars from Lin Jiayi before this, so he had no idea what this fifteen or sixteen-year-old teenager's abilities were like. He hadn't even seen Huo Yuhao's soul rings, but he had already used two soul skills. Xuan Ziwen was finally attracted by Huo Yuhao's behavior. However, he told himself that Huo Yuhao's display of abilities was that of a soul master. Huo Yuhao was from the number-one soul master academy in the Continent, Shrek, so his possession of these abilities wasn't that wondrous. He was here to test Huo Yuhao's soul engineering abilities.

Huo Yuhao started working while Xuan Ziwen continued thinking to himself. A silver-white carving knife appeared in his hands, but it wasn't the Life Guardian Blade – it was just a normal fine golden carving knife, and there was a layer of diamond powder on the blade. It was enough to carve and sculpt most metals, but it wasn't the best of the best. It would be extremely difficult to cut certain hard metals, and it could even break.

Huo Yuhao's left hand pinched the small silver-white sphere while his left hand waltzed swiftly. His movements were incredibly fast – at least, it seemed this way from Xuan Ziwen's perspective. Every slice connected to the next without pause, and deep grooves began to appear on this silver-white metal sphere's surface.

Xuan Ziwen came next to Huo Yuhao out of curiosity, and meticulously monitored his work.

Huo Yuhao worked with tremendous speed. It didn't take long for sophisticated and intricate patterns to appear on the metal sphere's surface. However, Xuan Ziwen's brows knitted into a knot, and he muttered to himself, "Charge, Speed, Speed, Speed, Speed, Speed, Speed. Adding seven arrays to such a small body is outstanding, but why are you making six Speeds? If this were used as a soul thruster, a single use would break your back in half. Titanium is strong and tough, but seven arrays being added to a piece this size – and six Speeds. You are pursuing something so extreme, so you can only use it once. Don't you feel like it's a waste due to the fact that you will discard it after a single instance?"

Xuan Ziwen's voice wasn't that soft, but Huo Yuhao seemed to be paying no attention to outside matters and focused on his work. The titanium sphere constantly rotated as the carving knife in his right hand sliced down repeatedly. Thin and fine titanium powder scattered subtly all over the lab desk.

Xuan Ziwen became even more interested in Huo Yuhao at this point. He could tell that this teenager's foundations were good, and even though this was a Class 3 soul tool, adding so many arrays at once was something that only a Class 4 soul engineer should be able to do. His hands were steady while his movements were quick yet rhythmic. What was more impressive was that he didn't make a single mistake despite all his bewildering speed, and Xuan Ziwen could tell with one look that it wasn't Huo Yuhao's first time creating formation arrays like this. Formation arrays were a soul tool's heart and soul, so there was no room for errors. Even a tiny error or mistake would cause the soul tool to be discarded as worthless.

Five minutes – Huo Yuhao took only five minutes to sculpt his formation array. He blew on the metal sphere gently, and a layer of metallic powder drifted down; the carving was complete.

What was previously just a normal titanium sphere now looked like an exquisite art piece at this point. Deep and shallow grooves, vertical and horizontal lines snaked all over the metal sphere, giving it a formidable three-dimensionality.

"I'm done, teacher Xuan." Huo Yuhao clasped the small formation array sphere in his hands.

Xuan Ziwen said coldly, "That's nothing impressive. Do you think creating such an extreme formation array is considered creative?"

Huo Yuhao glanced at the timer and said, "Teacher Xuan, there's still some time left. With your permission, I hope to be able to forge the entire soul tool and demonstrate it to you. The profundity of this soul tool I intend to create isn't about its formation arrays."

"Oh?" Xuan Ziwen watched him with astonishment and said, "Alright, show me. If it's actually that creative, you are allowed to exceed the time limit by a little bit." His interest was now sufficiently piqued by this youth from Shrek Academy.

"Yes." Huo Yuhao acknowledged and immediately returned to the pile of metal from before. He didn't pick titanium anymore, but chose iron instead, which was the most normal metal. It was a typical metal that was rarely used even when forging a soul tool's shell. Iron was typically used for molds, and people rarely used it directly for forging soul tools.

The Darkgolden Terrorclaw appeared once again, and chopped off piece after piece of iron. From Xuan Ziwen's perspective, Huo Yuhao's methods of creating soul tools were extremely special and unique.

Huo Yuhao could use his hands to knead a metal as tough as titanium, and even knead it into a perfect sphere – it was needless to say what he could do with iron.

Huo Yuhao quickly converted the iron pieces in his hands into the desired shapes. He used the carving knife after kneading the iron to carve them into the precise shapes and forms that he wanted.

If the time Huo Yuhao needed to create the formation arrays was considered quick, then the speed at which he was working now could only be described as frighteningly fast, almost to the point where Xuan Ziwen's eyes couldn't distinguish his movements. Huo Yuhao would subtly shift and tilt his body from time to time during his work, intentionally blocking off Xuan Ziwen's line of sight. When Xuan Ziwen changed his own position to continue watching, several metal pieces would already have been swiftly completed, and Xuan Ziwen never got a chance to witness what Huo Yuhao did during that time.

Xuan Ziwen could gradually discern some clues, however. Huo Yuhao wasn't just carving and sculpting the iron pieces when he was making the shell – he looked like he was engraving something on their surface, while piece after piece of arrow-shaped metal sticks were incorporated within that emanated soft metal clanging sounds from time to time.

"Crack, crack, clang, clang..." A series of crisp metallic sounds could be heard, and a iron box that was roughly one foot long, three inches wide and two inches thick appeared before Xuan Ziwen. The formation array that Huo Yuhao had designed before had already been infused inside. Despite his extraordinary memory, Xuan Ziwen couldn't remember much, as Huo Yuhao's forging speed was simply too fast, and he had intentionally blocked off his vision at times. He could feel that Huo Yuhao's soul tool

was extremely fine and exquisite, especially for a shell formed by iron. He even felt a little eager to discover what it could do.

“You’re done?” Xuan Ziwen asked Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao nodded and pressed down on its surface with his right hand, as if he were making some final touches.

“Alright. Show me what this consumable can do.” Xuan Ziwen muttered indifferently.

Huo Yuhao wasted no words, stepping out from behind the lab desk and moving into the soul tool testing area. Every large laboratory would have a soul tool testing area, which was used to test completed soul tools. Of course, the testing area had a limit to how much it could take, and soul tools that were too powerful couldn’t be used here.

Huo Yuhao raised the rectangular box in his hands and pointed at the alloy wall more than fifty meters away, which was two meters thick. He pressed with his fingers, and Xuan Ziwen only heard a buzzing sound.

A series of ear-piercing explosive sounds could be heard from fifty meters away, and metal powder erupted from the alloy wall.

The iron box in Huo Yuhao’s hands groaned and shattered into pieces with a splat. Huo Yuhao pressed his hands inwards, and the broken soul tool in his hands was immediately kneaded into a metal sphere with his Mysterious Jade Hands.

Any soul engineer below Class 4 probably wouldn’t understand what Huo Yuhao had done. However, Xuan Ziwen wasn’t a soul engineer below Class 4! The Illustrious Virtue Hall had given him special subsidies, and he was also one of the Illustrious Virtue Hall’s research consultants. He was also a special teacher in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, and he was a Class 8 soul engineer. He couldn’t be more clear about what Huo Yuhao did in that instant.

Xuan Ziwen’s eyes sparkled like the stars in the night sky, and he immediately gave his feedback. “Class 4 soul tool, name unknown. If better original materials were used, its offensive abilities would be close to a Class 5 soul tool – no, more accurately put, this should be considered a stationary soul tool that doesn’t come with explosive projectiles. It’s very difficult for soul barriers to defend against this, and its speed can rival that of a soul ray, while its force is far superior. What’s more outstanding is the fact that this soul tool has impressive extensibility. Wait – when you fired that shot, you only pressed a button on the soul tool, and you didn’t inject any soul power? I understand now. You used the Charge array to infuse soul power, to activate the entire soul tool when you were placing the entire formation array inside. Ingenious! What an ingenious plan! In other words, even normal people can use this soul tool as long as it’s completely charged. However, how can the overall discharge system be so small? There’s something about this soul tool’s shell, and you must have included elements that I don’t understand.”

Huo Yuhao was filled with awe as he listened to Xuan Ziwen’s analysis – every statement was right on point. There indeed was something within the shell. The shell’s structure was so compact and sophisticated that it could rival even the formation array inside. This was the most important feature of the entire soul tool – the formation array was nothing much, but this shell was Huo Yuhao’s secret.

This soul tool had a name that shook the entire Continent ten thousand years ago – Zhuge Divine Crossbow. Tang San, the person that established the Tang Sect, was its inventor. However, the Zhuge Divine Crossbow that Huo Yuhao had just forged was a soul tool that incorporated the Zhuge Divine Crossbow’s principles and structures.

Even though he had had the Zhuge Divine Crossbow’s original blueprint, Huo Yuhao had had to study it for more than half a year before finally completing this creation. Even Fan Yu didn’t know this soul tool’s actual structure, as this was the first soul tool that he had created for the Tang Sect. Just as Xuan Ziwen said, the Zhuge Divine Crossbow’s force wasn’t that formidable, but its authentic extensibility and that normal people could also use it could be considered exemplary and extraordinary features – it could even be said to be something that the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy had been pursuing for a long time.

The number-one research topic pursued by the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy was how they could enable normal people to use soul tools. This research topic focused on empirical principles, and not how soul tools were made or how they operated.

Xuan Ziwen grabbed Huo Yuhao’s hands and said, “Tell me right now, how did you do that? How did you create such an impressive soul tool? No, sorry, I’m too excited. Sell it to me – sell your research to me. You can name any price you want. How about that?”

Huo Yuhao’s impression of Xuan Ziwen became a little better as he watched Xuan Ziwen’s exhilaration. He could feel that Xuan Ziwen was the kind of person that would give everything he had for his research, and these kinds of people were usually purer, and didn’t have too many ulterior motives.

“Teacher Xuan, I’m here for your guidance. Did I pass the assessment?”

“Of course you’ve passed. Are you selling this soul tool? Even though its empirical principles may not be enough to solve the problem, it will be able to give great inspiration... Wait, I don’t know your name yet.”

Huo Yuhao sounded a little exasperated, and replied, “My name is Huo Yuhao.”

“Alright, alright. Huo Yuhao, tell me – can you tell me your research findings?” Xuan Ziwen asked eagerly.

Huo Yuhao shook his head without hesitation. “I’m sorry, teacher Xuan, I can’t sell it to you. I’m sure you’re aware of the competition between the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy and Shrek Academy. More importantly, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy belongs to the Sun Moon Empire. You should understand how frightening it could be if soul tools that could be used by normal people were eventually dispersed to the military.”

Xuan Ziwen’s brows creased tightly and said, “That means you’re not willing to sell?”

Huo Yuhao replied with a resolute and uncompromising tone, “No, I’m not. You don’t look like a belligerent, so do you really want to use my research to incite conflict and war? Even if it’s for assistance, I belong to the Star Luo Empire, and I cannot give my research findings to the Sun Moon Empire.”

Xuan Ziwen's facial expressions changed continuously as he said. "Aren't you afraid of me doing something to you because of your research?"

Huo Yuhao smiled plainly and answered, "You probably wouldn't have told me that if you did harbor any such intentions. Furthermore, Shrek Academy can't be so easily bullied and pushed around by others. Even though your cultivation is much higher than mine, I have a ten percent chance of taking you down with me at this distance – do you believe me?"

Xuan Ziwen didn't explode in a fit of fury like Huo Yuhao imagined he would. Instead, Xuan Ziwen had a look of genuine sincerity and said, "Alright, then tell me – what will it take for you to share your research findings with me? How about I give everything I have to teach and mentor you? I will use my own research findings in exchange for yours. You have to know that my latest research findings are extraordinarily impressive, and one of them is controlling soul tools from a distance. This is something that only I can do within the entire Illustrious Virtue Hall. Even though it's a Class 8 soul tool, people have touted it to be the Class 9 soul tool among Class 8 soul tools."

Huo Yuhao still shook his head with a calm expression on his face. He didn't know that if Jing Hongchen, the Hallmaster of the Virtuous Hall, heard Xuan Ziwen's words, he probably would have vomited blood.

"Don't you understand?" Xuan Ziwen could tell that Huo Yuhao disregarded his own research findings, and immediately grew furious.

Huo Yuhao said plainly, "I don't really understand, teacher Xuan. However, I can tell that your research findings are more suitable for the national military, and not so much for personal use. However, I'm not a soldier. As for reconnaissance abilities, do have a look."

Huo Yuhao's eyes glowed as he spoke. Pale golden light flowed out, and his Spiritual Detection immediately landed on Xuan Ziwen's body.

Three-dimensional images immediately appeared in Xuan Ziwen's mind. He felt his body quiver vigorously as he could clearly feel everything within five hundred meters around him. Everything, including things outside the laboratory, were all part of this mystical detection ability.

Huo Yuhao didn't give him much time to experience it, and he withdrew his soul skill as soon as he activated it. He was still gazing calmly at Xuan Ziwen. He revealed his abilities because he had a faint feeling that he could make a breakthrough with this teacher Xuan. This breakthrough would be immeasurably beneficial for both Shrek Academy and the Tang Sect.

"You..." Xuan Ziwen gazed at Huo Yuhao, his words stuck in his throat, rendered completely speechless momentarily. "That's not possible! You can't be a spirit-type soul master, just judging from the soul skills you displayed forging the soul tool. You..."

"Heh. It's not really a secret—I have twin martial souls; one assault-type, one spiritual control-type. The files you academy has on me should say about as much." With his experiences in the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, there wasn't much hidden about him, in the eyes of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, from two years ago. Huo Yuhao was a spirit-type soul master, making his instincts keenly accurate, and he could sense that this teacher Xuan wasn't someone sent with malicious intentions at all. His blistering passion for soul tools gave Huo Yuhao an idea.

“Spirit-type? Assault-type?” Xuan Ziwen’s eyes instantly began to sparkle. He grabbed Huo Yuhao’s shoulders and said, “A soul master with twin martial souls—and one of them is a spirit-type! What a heaven-sent blessing!. This is great, just too great.”

Huo Yuhao forced a laugh and said, “Don’t be so excited, teacher Xuan. Can you let go of me first?”

“Oh, sorry.” Xuan Ziwen’s face was flushed red from all the excitement. “Spirit-type—you live up to the Shrek Academy name! Wow, you actually have a spirit-type martial soul. Yuhao, what’s your soul power rank?” It wasn’t as simple as just accepting Huo Yuhao, within this brief conversation he even changed his form of addressing him.

“Rank 40. However, my spirit-type soul is the primary soul for now, and spirit-type souls are just too few and far between, so I just haven’t been able to get a fourth ring yet. I’m still a three-ringed Soul Elder.” Huo Yuhao gave a detailed explanation. The thought from earlier flared up again as he saw the fiery passion in Xuan Ziwen’s eyes.

Xuan Ziwen frowned and said, “Rank 40? That’s a little too low. We could have a go if you had at least six soul rings.”

Huo Yuhao was momentarily speechless, and couldn’t help but remind him. “I’m only fourteen this year, teacher Xuan! Not twenty-four!”

“Uh... Right, I forgot. Regardless, you’ve won my approval with your abilities. I will admit that with the Spiritual Detection alone, I am confident in mentoring you to become a top-tier soul engineer, even if you’d never touched soul tools before. I just have a few more questions for you, Yuhao.”

Huo Yuhao nodded.

Xuan Ziwen contemplated for a short while, lowered his voice and asked, “First off, can you control your Spiritual Detection’s area of effect? More specifically, can you reduce the area of effect in exchange for accuracy and precision?”

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, “I can do that for myself. However, I can’t do that if I’m sharing my Spiritual Detection with others.”

Xuan Ziwen said contentedly, “That’s impressive enough as is. Soul engineers need to rely on hard work to learn and research, they can’t just rely on strength to create things—strength is a supporting tool. My second question is: Can your Spiritual Detection reach deep into physical materials to perceive the transformations within them?”

Huo Yuhao said without hesitation, “Yes, but only to a certain level. To put it simply, I can’t look deep inside the most complex things, but a human body is no problem. Naturally, that also means that I can perceive soul power transformations inside someone.”

Xuan Ziwen didn’t expect Huo Yuhao to be so honest and straightforward with him. He gave an astonished glance as he looked over at Huo Yuhao, then he tilted his head slightly as he said, “Truly a powerful spirit-type martial soul. My last question: Will you accept me as your teacher, as a disciple? My hope is that you leave Shrek Academy and join the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. This might sound outrageous, but I can guarantee you direct entrance to the Illustrious Virtue Hall, without any entry examinations at all. I will teach you all I have to offer, and mentor you into a top-tier soul

engineer, and you will be a part in our most important and substantial research projects. Plus, I daresay that the Illustrious Virtue Hall is at least dozens of years ahead in soul tool research from any other power.”

Huo Yuhao smiled and replied, “I realized that in the trip to The Radiant City, teacher Xuan, and I’m sure what you’ve just said is true. Dozens may even be a conservative estimate. However, I need to know what will happen if the day comes, where the Illustrious Virtue Hall’s technology and soul tools leave them entirely unafraid of even the most powerful soul masters. Will the Sun Moon Empire be as peaceful as they are now?”

“Uh...” Xuan Ziwen frowned and replied impatiently, “This isn’t something that researchers like us should be worried about. We should only care about how to produce more magnificent, practical, and novel soul tools.”

Huo Yuhao loosed a faint sigh and said, “That’s because this is your country, but it isn’t mine. I don’t want to, nor can I, fuel conflicts because of my passion for soul tools, which leads to the destruction of life.”

Xuan Ziwen muttered indifferently, “You’re too full of yourself. You think you can incite a war by yourself?”

Huo Yuhao said seriously, “Maybe I’m not powerful enough to incite a war, but I won’t give my abilities to a rival country—do forgive me. You are my teacher now, so I hope that means you’re willing to guide me.”

Xuan Ziwen’s face seemed a little black, but he had to admit that this exchange student from Shrek Academy possesses the qualifications to shake him to the core. Perhaps this little fella didn’t have much experience in regards to soul tool research and concepts, but he has solid foundations and a creativity that is imperative for soul tool research. Furthermore, he has a spirit-type martial soul, and that’s as unique and extraordinary as it could get.

Xuan Ziwen sighed and said, “That’s a pity. However, I’m still willing to mentor you. The only difference is that I can’t share some of the most crucial information from the Illustrious Virtue Hall. Of course, we can still negotiate if you’re willing to make an exchange using your research findings.” He smiled sheepishly after he spoke.

Huo Yuhao said, “Have you ever thought about leaving this place, teacher Xuan?”

Xuan Ziwen was slightly taken aback, and shook his head as he said, “No. Why would I leave? I have always wanted to become a top-tier soul engineer since I was kid. I want to enable the civilians, so that they too can use soul tools, so that I can change their lives forever, and perhaps even the entire world. Across the entire Continent, only the Illustrious Virtue Hall can provide sufficient budget and a research direction for me. Even though the Illustrious Virtue Hall can’t teach me much, they still have the best research facilities. Shrek Academy may have superior soul masters, but they are far inferior in terms of soul tool research facilities.”

Huo Yuhao smiled. “I wasn’t about to convince you to join Shrek Academy. I wanted to tell you that the only way for you to obtain my research findings is to join my sect. I accomplished my research by incorporating the esoteric knowledge from my sect, so it doesn’t really belong to myself.”

Xuan Ziwen was stunned momentarily and asked subconsciously, “You have a sect? What sect?”

Huo Yuhao said, “The Tang Sect. I’m not sure if you’ve heard of it before...”

Xuan Ziwen contemplated for a short while, and then exclaimed, “The Tang Sect—the one that invented hidden weapons? The Tang Sect that existed during the time of the Heaven Dou Empire?”

Huo Yuhao nodded his head and asked with a surprised look, “You know of the Heaven Dou Empire?”

Xuan Ziwen replied, “Of course I do. I come from the Heavenly Soul Empire, but my parents’ generation migrated to the Sun Moon Empire.”

Huo Yuhao was even more moved at this. “Then, are you willing to join the Tang Sect?”

Xuan Ziwen grunted coldly and answered, “Are those lunatic ravings, or are you trying to deceive me? According to what I know, the Tang Sect no longer exists. Even if there are remnants of it lying around, they are extremely weak. Are you sure you can provide me with sufficient research expenses and facilities?”

Huo Yuhao could feel the contempt and scorn in his voice, and he was instantly infuriated. However, he took a deep breath and pacified his rage quickly, as he had to admit that Tang Sect was indeed in a declining state, and was currently far from enough to attract the likes of Xuan Ziwen.

“Yes, the Tang Sect cannot afford a top-tier soul engineer like you right now. However, let’s make a bet. If the Tang Sect rises again within ten years, and they have a large enough research budget and facilities for you, then you shall join it.”

Xuan Ziwen answered, “You still don’t understand what I’m after. I don’t care about the money, and I probably don’t care about anything else except the profound world of soul tools—much like the research that you just showed me. How about this? I will join your Tang Sect if you can produce ten of these extraordinary research findings.”

Huo Yuhao raised his right hand and placed it before Xuan Ziwen.

Xuan Ziwen was a little shocked. “What are you doing?”

Huo Yuhao said with determination, “A promise must be kept! We will high-five to make an oath.”

Xuan Ziwen chuckled and blurted out, “You think it’s so easy to produce similar research breakthroughs? I have to say you could even be considered fortunate to have one—some soul engineers cannot even produce one such research breakthrough in a lifetime, let alone ten in different fields.”

Huo Yuhao’s eyes sparkled as he gazed at Xuan Ziwen and said, “Teacher Xuan, whether or not I can accomplish this is my problem. I only want to ask you—if I succeed, will you honor your word?”

The amusement in Xuan Ziwen’s eyes disappeared as he lowered his voice and said, “If you can accomplish it, and every soul tool research direction is different, then I will join the Tang Sect.”

“Clap, clap, clap.” Three high-fives, and the oath was made.

Chapter 158: Senior Sister Ju Zi

Xuan Ziwen could tell that Huo Yuhao's eyes had changed a little after their three high-fives. Huo Yuhao was no longer a child in his eyes, as he could clearly feel that Huo Yuhao wasn't just saying all this for the fun of it. The determination and self-confidence in his eyes was truly stunning and remarkable.

"Alright, then we shall start today's lesson. Hopefully, I can give you even more pleasant surprises today. However, I have to say that you can't take too long to devise ten different research breakthroughs, or I may no longer have that hysterical passion to achieve my dreams when I'm too old."

Xuan Ziwen was stubborn and passionate about soul tools, but that didn't mean he wasn't rational and intelligent about other things. Huo Yuhao's research was enough to move him, but it wasn't enough to pull him over without conditions and prerequisites.

Huo Yuhao nodded and smiled. "Let's begin our lesson, teacher Xuan. I have already passed your assessment, and I am your student now."

Xuan Ziwen nodded and said, "Alright then, let's start. I can tell that your foundations are solid and reliable, and you are a unique spirit-type soul master. I want to discuss some principles and concepts before I elaborate more about techniques in forging soul tools. Once your principles and concepts are right, you won't digress from the right path so easily when you're doing deeper research.

"Tell me... what is a soul tool?" Xuan Ziwen's face was serious and solemn.

Huo Yuhao replied, "They are tools activated and directed by a soul master's soul power. They can be used as weapons, or tools to support people's' daily lives or their work." This should be the model answer, and he had known that ever since he started learning how to forge soul tools.

However, Xuan Ziwen shook his head disappointedly when he heard these words.

"I have to say that Shrek's views and perception of soul tools is simply too backward. I will give you a new definition – you must memorize it. What are soul tools? Soul tools have nothing to do with soul masters. The meaning of the existence and advancement of soul tools lies in catalyzing human society's evolution.

"That means research and development in soul tools is intended to advance and further societal development, so that humans can enjoy a stronger and more fulfilling existence. I have always believed that, one day in the near future, humankind will be able to use soul tools to dominate and subdue all other species, perhaps even other worlds that are not our own. Our vision may be too insignificant and trivial for now, but humans are also constantly growing and evolving in tandem with our advancements in soul tools. Do you believe that one day, humans without even a thread of soul power can use soul tools to hunt and kill ten thousand year soul beasts?"

Huo Yuhao paid attention and remembered everything that Xuan Ziwen said to him. His current impression of Xuan Ziwen was similar to the same awe and amazement that Xuan Ziwen had felt when Huo Yuhao had forged the Zhuge Divine Crossbow.

Xuan Ziwen had flipped his knowledge and understanding of soul tools with just a few simple words, and this was entirely because of the gap in their standards.

"Human evolution and development has been extremely slow over the past few thousand years. I believe that the Douluo Continent's sluggish development would have continued if it hadn't collided

with the Sun Moon Continent. Even now, the three empires native to the Douluo Continent haven't entirely taken soul tools seriously. Without considering top-tier soul masters, I dare say that the Sun Moon Empire is entirely capable of using soul tools to dominate and unify the entire continent. There is already a rift in the levels of civilization." Xuan Ziwen's speech gave the impression that he couldn't stand not saying staggering and startling things.

"However, our research and development in soul tools has reached a bottleneck. The reason is simple: soul masters are the bottleneck.

"That is because research in soul tools began with the notion and purpose of soul masters using them, so soul power was required to activate them. Over the past few thousand years, every single piece of research has been channeled and focused on this aspect. This has created a worldwide malady, in that soul tools cannot be used on a large scale. Soul masters are ultimately the elites among humans, but they are still the minority, and normal citizens are still the majority. If soul tools cannot enter normal citizens' lives, then we will never truly realize the dream of advancing humankind and transcending generational boundaries. Mightier soul tools required stronger soul masters to use them, and this moronic logic has led to the stagnation of soul tool research. Our current research direction is 'how do we enable normal citizens to use soul tools?' This is the reason why I was so amazed and bewildered when I saw the soul tool that you just created!

"Even though you haven't completely solved the problem, you have allowed soul masters to act as a vector for charging the soul tool. Once it's charged, the soul tool that you have forged can be used by normal citizens. This is what I'm most concerned about, and not your soul tool's force. In other words, this soul tool's most important technology is about using gears and buttons so that the Charge array can be used as a primer, instead of soul power. Therefore, you should do everything you can to explore and research soul tools for civilian use if you wish to move me. The relatively more successful examples are currently limited to stationary soul tools. The only problem is that stationary soul tools are simply too expensive, and even the Illustrious Virtue Hall rarely forges high-level stationary soul tools. To this day, the Sun Moon Empire has only equipped a single stationary soul tool regiment."

Xuan Ziwen suddenly seemed to realize that he had misspoke, and he forced a laugh in exasperation. "Pretend you didn't hear that last sentence."

Huo Yuhao smiled in understanding but said nothing, and only listened intently to Xuan Ziwen's explanation.

Xuan Ziwen's mood and interest had been completely triggered by now, and he went on and on about his knowledge and understanding of soul tools, as well as some principles and concepts. Huo Yuhao was like a dried-up sponge, and constantly absorbed all this information. He could imprint everything into his mind with impeccable accuracy due to his supernatural memory.

Xuan Ziwen's research in regards to soul tools truly flabbergasted Huo Yuhao. He was a Class 8 soul engineer, but the feeling he gave Huo Yuhao was different from what he felt with Fan Yu. Fan Yu's style was stability, and Huo Yuhao's foundations had become extremely sturdy under his guidance.

Xuan Ziwen was the complete opposite. His mind was like a heavenly steed soaring through the skies, bold and imaginative; he was a soul engineer filled with creativity and vigor. His research was mostly unrelated to war, and certain principles and concepts gave Huo Yuhao a sudden flash of insight. Some

things that he didn't understand about soul tools, or some things that he just couldn't wrap his head around, were smoothed out and resolved by Xuan Ziwen's guidance in principles and concepts. Even though it couldn't be considered a complete resolution, he could at least see a clear path before him.

This was also a soul engineer curriculum, but the gap had become increasingly conspicuous. Huo Yuhao's learning in Shrek Academy was more about memorizing blueprints of soul tool formation arrays, yet Xuan Ziwen didn't produce a single blueprint for him! He was merely explaining explaining the innovative principles of soul tools. In Xuan Ziwen's words, a soul engineer teacher should never give his or her students rules and boxes to follow. Soul engineer teachers should be giving their students principles and concepts, and once their students obtained a sufficient foundation, they would use their understanding in principles and concepts along with their personal creativity to create soul tools that belonged to themselves.

This was the main reason why Huo Yuhao amazed Xuan Ziwen when he made something of his own during the assessment.

Huo Yuhao felt as if he was re-learning everything he knew about soul tools under Xuan Ziwen's guidance. His brain had been completely rewired at this point, and he would ask some questions from time to time, which Xuan Ziwen answered immediately without exception. Time seemed to flash by as an hour passed just like that. Xuan Ziwen spoke until even he was a little exhausted, but Huo Yuhao was still as excited and lively as ever – one of the major advantages of being a spirit-type soul master.

Creeeeak... The lab door suddenly opened with a jarring creak and shook Huo Yuhao out of his immersion in the ocean of knowledge as he subconsciously glanced towards the door.

It was just a glance, but his eyes suddenly seemed to freeze, and he could no longer withdraw his gaze.

There was a young woman standing by the door. She seemed a little drowsy-eyed, but her beauty made Huo Yuhao lose his focus even though he had seen many pretty girls before.

This young lady had long, flowing black hair. She looked to be between seventeen and eighteen years of age, her large and nimble eyes appearing a little nebulous. Her complexion was just too impressive, as not a single pore could be seen on her soft and tender skin, as if he could squeeze water out of her with just a single pinch. She wore a school uniform like everyone else, which brought out her relatively attractive figure. Perhaps she wasn't as pretty as Jiang Nannans, but her lazy and naturally cute demeanor was riveting.

"You're early, teacher! What a rare sight!" The young girl acted like she didn't see Huo Yuhao at all, addressing Xuan Ziwen lazily. She walked over and sat down on the lab desk before she laid down on top of it, as if she wanted to take yet another nap.

"Ahem, ahem!" Xuan Ziwen coughed dryly and said, "Stop sleeping, Ju Zi. Can't you see there's someone new here?"

The young girl referred to as "Ju Zi" was still lying down. She waved her right hand lazily, as if she were swatting flies and said, "Stop talking and let me sleep for a little while. You know what I was doing last night when I burned the midnight oil." Her soft and silky voice gave people a strange and tickly sensation in their hearts.

Xuan Ziwen was a little exasperated and said, "Forget it. Don't mind her, she's just like that. Her name is Ju Zi, and she's also one of my students. You can call her senior sister from now on, or you can just address her by her name. She was researching soul tools last night, and she kept at a single experiment until midnight. That is the reason why she's only up at this hour. I only have four students. The other three are out to gain experience, and will probably only be back after a few days."

"Experience? Soul engineers also have to venture outside for experience? What kind of experience is that?" Huo Yuhao asked curiously.

Xuan Ziwen replied, "Of course they need to have experience! Simply doing experiments inside a lab is not enough, and some research has to be tested in real life so that it can be improved, and better results obtained. I guided them through forging some soul tools before this, and they brought their soul tools out for experiments. You will have similar experiences in the days to come."

"Since you already have Rank 40 soul power, you should go out and get your fourth soul ring as soon as possible. Even though I'm unwilling to admit it, soul engineers will dread the stagnation of their soul power the most, as powerful soul tools require a powerful soul master to wield them right now."

Huo Yuhao forced a laugh and said, "It's not like I'm delaying in getting another soul ring. Suitable spirit-type soul beasts are just too rare, if that wasn't the case, I wouldn't have dragged it out this long."

Xuan Ziwen contemplated momentarily, then said, "Rare doesn't mean nonexistent. Even though the Sun Moon Empire's overall soul beast quality may be inferior to that of the Great Star Dou Forest near Shrek Academy, it holds true that different regions will have different types of soul beasts. I can accompany you to find a suitable soul ring, you can get one as long as you find an appropriate soul beast."

"Thank you, teacher Xuan." Huo Yuhao thanked him sincerely. While he wasn't wholly convinced that Xuan Ziwen could take him to find a suitable soul beast, he could still appreciate his teacher's good intentions.

Xuan Ziwen glanced at the time and said, "Alright, it's getting late. We will stop here for today, in the meantime you can think things over on your own. I can only teach you the principles, after that your subsequent inventions and innovations are yours alone."

"Yes." Huo Yuhao nodded.

Xuan Ziwen sauntered beside Ju Zi and suddenly shouted, "It's time to eat!"

"Ah! Let's go! The shrimp crackers will be gone!" This beautiful girl, who still had sleepy and dazed eyes just a moment ago, suddenly leapt to her feet. She raced out of the lab with a spring in her step while Huo Yuhao watched her, slack-jawed.

Xuan Ziwen laughed uncontrollably as he watched her mannerisms.

It didn't take long before Ju Zi stomped furiously back into the lab. She raised her arm and hurled a sphere of yellow light towards Xuan Ziwen exclaiming, "You lied to me! You lied to me again. I'm going to kill you." She tossed sphere after sphere of yellow light as she spoke.

Xuan Ziwen could catch a few at the start, but was quickly overwhelmed and guffawed, “Help me, Yuhao.”

Huo Yuhao could see everything from the moment Ju Zi raised her hands into the air. She was actually throwing out oranges, every single one was ripe and supple. It was apparent that she was a food-type soul master with an Orange martial soul.

Huo Yuhao’s movements were quite unlike Xuan Ziwen, while neither released their martial soul, Huo Yuhao seemed to grow innumerable hands, catching every single orange barreling through the air. Not a single orange could get by him, he simply dropped them on the ground beside him.

“Eh?” Ju Zi finally realized there was someone else in the lab. She stopped what she was doing and asked, “Who are you?”

Xuan Ziwen walked towards Huo Yuhao and explained, “He is your new junior brother, and I will be mentoring him from today onwards.”

Huo Yuhao was relatively tall and lanky compared to others of the same age. He had a cool and composed demeanor, so he seemed more like a teenager closer to seventeen or eighteen years old.

Ju Zi waved at him indifferently before she rushed in front of Xuan Ziwen angrily and said, “You lied to me again, teacher Xuan. If you do that again, I’m going to request a change of teachers.”

Xuan Ziwen chuckled and replied, “Is it my fault that you were born a glutton? Everything would be okay if you didn’t react so dramatically. I leave you in charge of answering your junior brother’s questions when I’m not around. His name is Huo Yuhao.”

Huo Yuhao stepped forward a bit rushed and said respectfully, “Nice to meet you, senior sister Ju Zi.”

Ju Zi looked him up and down more carefully than before, then muttered, “I don’t have time for that, I still have to continue researching and studying my own things. Anyways, I’m leaving to find something to eat—I’m famished! I haven’t had anything to eat yet.” She waved her hands as she spoke and departed the laboratory once more.

Xuan Ziwen explained sheepishly, “Our learning atmosphere is a little more relaxed. Ju Zi might seem reserved and isolated from her surroundings, but she has extraordinary talents with soul tools—she’s already a Class 5 soul engineer. The only thing she’s lacking is cultivation level.”

Huo Yuhao suddenly thought of something and asked, “I’ve seen many students from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy before, and I noticed that they typically possess a very formidable soul power from a young age—reaching Rank 60 before twenty years of age isn’t rare, is it? Have they achieved it by eating exotic foods or whatnot? That might be a little excessive.”

Xuan Ziwen sighed and answered, “They’re spoiling them with undue haste. The academy has employed some special and unnatural methods to aid students with a talent for forging soul tools, and the academy spends a myriad amount of exotic foods and precious resources to boost their cultivations. This method has side effects, which will affect their future development. I can’t tell you about that though—it’s classified.”

Xuan Ziwen quickly left, and Huo Yuhao was the only person left inside the lab. Huo Yuhao sat down on the ground crossed-legged, and started meditating.

He wasn't just trying to understand and consolidate the things he learned from Xuan Ziwen—he was also trying to memorize the structure and formation arrays of the soul tools within the laboratory. But he didn't dare to draw them onto paper right now, as he wasn't quite sure if there wasn't a soul tool spying on him or monitoring his actions.

He was about to head down to the canteen to eat after finishing up when the lab door opened again—Ju Zi was back.

“Senior sister Ju Zi.” Huo Yuhao was a little fatigued when he greeted Ju Zi.

Ju Zi raised one hand and tossed a card that looked like it was made of crystal to Huo Yuhao. Huo Yuhao caught it.

Ju Zi said, “How troublesome. Teacher Xuan wanted me to give you this access card. You'll be able to go in and out of the laboratory when you like with it. We don't really have any rules here, so you can carry on with your own research if you have any, and find teacher Xuan if you have something you don't understand. Alright, I'm going to take a nap and continue my research in the afternoon.” She yawned as she spoke. She turned and began walking towards the exit.

She suddenly stopped after taking only a step or two and snapped her head around. “Huo Yuhao, right? How did you catch so many of my oranges awhile ago?”

Huo Yuhao answered, “It's a technique from my sect.”

“What sect are you from?” Ju Zi asked curiously.

“The Tang Sect.” Huo Yuhao replied.

Ju Zi was a little confused, and asked, “I've never heard of it before. Is it fun?”

Huo Yuhao felt a little speechless, but he still replied. “A sect shouldn't be described as ‘fun’, senior sister.”

Ju Zi grunted and said, “Forget it, if it's not fun, I'm out.” She pranced away just like that.

Huo Yuhao ate a simple lunch and returned to the lab in the early afternoon. Neither Xuan Ziwen nor Ju Zi were around.

He recalled Xuan Ziwen's advice from the morning, and began to experiment with soul tools. He was trying to forge a commonplace, but extremely valuable, soul tool—a Class 4 Milk Bottle.

The Milk Bottle, and soul tools like it, were always in high demand. Only problem is that forging one is a troublesome process, with its formation arrays being especially sophisticated. Huo Yuhao was experimenting in simplifying these complex formation arrays.

After about thirty minutes of deep concentration, Ju Zi walked in. She wasn't too concerned to see Huo Yuhao making a soul tool off to the side, she walked over to the other side of the lab desk and got down to work. She was also creating formation arrays.

Huo Yuhao's senses were incredibly perceptive, he was aware of her presence the moment she entered. He discreetly activated Spiritual Detection and monitored his senior sister's movements.

Even with his good impression of Xuan Ziwen, he still knew it would be difficult to pick up any core knowledge or bits and pieces of information, because he was from Shrek Academy. He had to learn whatever he could, however he could do it.

Huo Yuhao's first impression of Ju Zi was that she seemed cute, she was pretty too, but also ignorant and obnoxious. He quickly realized that Ju Zi was almost like a completely different person when she walked in. She was extraordinarily focused, as if without a care in the world for anything else besides the formation array she was forging at the moment. It was far more complicated than Huo Yuhao's Class 4 Milk Bottle's formation array. Huo Yuhao couldn't even tell what the formation array was for, despite his vast memory banks of formation arrays—of course, this was also because Ju Zi had just started carving.

Ju Zi appeared to enter a state of absolute concentration, as if she didn't realize that Huo Yuhao was now right behind her. She grabbed a silver-white piece of metal with her left hand while she held a carving knife with unique colors in her right. This knife looked like it was made of clear and transparent crystal, and its handle was an orangish-red. The blade's hues gradually became lighter and more plain from the handle all the way up to the tip, which was so clear and transparent that it was almost invisible.

The carving knife spun between her fingers, and waltzed like a sphere of flame.

Fan Yu had once remarked that different soul engineers had different preferences and varying carving knives when creating formation arrays. Those who would eventually become top-ranked soul engineers all had their own unique techniques and style.

Huo Yuhao was still discovering his own style and preferences. However, he could see fragments of a style from Ju Zi.

Ju Zi gave onlookers a light and agile feeling when she handled her carving knife. The knife looked like a ball of flame, only briefly touching the metal piece before it was withdrawn, and didn't stop moving for even a single moment. This natural movement made it seem like she was caressing the metal piece with her carving knife. Metal scraps continuously drifted to the floor, but none of them scattered outwards; the intricate textures made her work seem like that of uncanny and superlative craftsmanship.

One was sitting down while the other was standing up. One was carving in silence while the other observed quietly from the side. Like this, time unwittingly flew by.

Dusk was gradually approaching, warm lights automatically lit up inside the lab to maintain the brightness. However, neither Huo Yuhao nor Ju Zi noticed these changes.

One was focused on working, another was watching on, enchanted.

Today's takeaways were almost overwhelming for Huo Yuhao. He had received Xuan Ziwen's guidance in soul engineering principles this morning, but these several hours of standing during the afternoon were actually even more important.

This was the optimal combination of theory and hands-on practice. Ju Zi was effectively giving him an exciting and magnificent practical lesson, it was especially effective because she was a form of

confirmation for what Xuan Ziwen had talked about in the morning. A new door to becoming a proper soul engineer was slowly opening before Huo Yuhao.

Ju Zi heaved a long breath after a long time. “Oh, it’s finally done.” The silver-white metal piece became a square formation array. The horizontal and vertical lines on the formation array were precise and orderly, and Huo Yuhao wouldn’t have believed it if you told him they were carved manually, without the help of any other tools, had he not just seen it happen in person.

“Why didn’t you use any other tools?” Huo Yuhao spoke for the first time after she finished her work.

“Ah!” Ju Zi was clearly startled. Her body instantly erupted with orangish-red radiance, and uncountable oranges were immediately flung towards Huo Yuhao. The oranges whooshed through the air like they were shot out by a tornado.

Huo Yuhao didn’t expect she would have such a violent reaction, but his battle instincts caused him to respond subconsciously.

Diamond-like crystals covered his entire body, and the flurry of oranges crashed against him, but didn’t even force him to take a single step back. The oranges ricocheted against the Ice Empress’ Armor and scattered in different directions.

Huo Yuhao’s pupils suddenly dilated as he felt more than ten oranges soundlessly stick to his body, and he was assaulted with an unprecedented sense of danger.

He made a split-second judgment due to his perceptive senses. Emerald light flickered as a shadow flashed behind his body. An emerald-green layer of light blew outwards with his body at the center before being immediately withdrawn.

Everything froze within an area of about ten meters in diameter. Ju Zi had already turned around, and was looking at Huo Yuhao with an astonished look on her face, the whirling oranges in the sky—just stopped and remained in a strange state of silence.

The oranges rained down from above, to the ground. They crackled like fireworks as they hit the floor, like they were rocks slamming into the ground.

Huo Yuhao first scanned his body. There were more than ten oranges stuck to his Ice Empress’ Armor, but they had all become small ice blocks, and their original effects were dispelled by his Ultimate Ice.

He pinched one of them, and realized that the orange’s surface was soft and tender like an actual orange. He used his Spiritual Detection and discovered, to his intense fright and bewilderment, that this orange contained a complicated formation array that was no weaker than that of a Class 4 soul tool, as well as a small energy-gathering array. The soul power contained within it had been frozen luckily—if not, he couldn’t even begin to imagine what would have happened.

Without a doubt, her food-type martial spirit was just like her name, Orange. Her food-type martial soul didn’t contain much offensive power, but was incredibly misleading. He would have suffered unimaginably had his senses not been adequately keen and perceptive. Ten Class 4 soul tools detonating on his body at the same time—not even his Ice Empress’ Armor could’ve taken that! Of course, it was likely that Ju Zi would stop what she was doing when she realized it was him. However, Huo Yuhao wouldn’t gamble with his life over this.

He shook his body, and the ten “oranges” fell off. Huo Yuhao used the Controlling Crane Capturing Dragon technique to grab them carefully before putting them on the lab desk some distance away.

Huo Yuhao placed his right hand on Ju Zi’s shoulder, and the Ultimate Ice energy released by the Domain of Perpetual Ice was slowly withdrawn.

Ju Zi was a five-ringed Soul King, but it would have probably still taken her around fifteen minutes to remove the effects on her own, and this was only when Huo Yuhao used the Domain of Perpetual Ice without much force in consideration of her safety.

“It’s so cold.” Ju Zi shivered, and her charming figure quivered slightly before she sat back down. Her red and supple lips were turning blue, and the infuriated expression in her eyes held a tinge of fright.

“What were you thinking?!” Ju Zi exclaimed angrily.

Huo Yuhao forced a laugh and said, “I would not have acted like that if you didn’t react so violently.”

Ju Zi grunted angrily and pointed a finger at Huo Yuhao’s nose. “Just you wait!” She took the newly finished formation array as she spoke and stormed out.

Huo Yuhao stroked his nose. He felt as exasperated—he had never intended to offend this senior sister, but he couldn’t possibly be expected not to retaliate in that kind of situation.

He didn’t think too much about it. The sky was getting darker by the minute, after eating something light at the canteen, he returned to the dormitory and immediately started meditating.

Huo Yuhao’s meditation process was different from that of normal soul masters. After obtaining his second spiritual sea, Huo Yuhao realized that he could separate a strand of consciousness to think about things while he cultivated. This was undoubtedly a great increase for his intellect and ability to grasp concepts.

This was how things were: He had absorbed voluminous amounts of knowledge, even though it was only the first day, and he needed time to fuse what he’d learned today with the things he already knew. All so he could better understand the most advanced soul tool engineering principles.

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Three days passed in the blink of an eye. Over these few days Huo Yuhao received Xuan Ziwen’s meticulous guidance on principles and concepts. Even though he hadn’t attempted to forge another soul tool yet, he obtained a fresh mind, full of knowledge about soul tools. However, he didn’t see Ju Zi again after the first day, as if she’d just vanished into thin air.

On the morning of the fourth day, Huo Yuhao arrived early and started cleaning up the lab once he arrived. He’d been doing this since the second day; he cleaned every the lab until it was spotless and then awaited Xuan Ziwen’s arrival.

He was halfway through cleaning when the lab door suddenly shot open. Huo Yuhao was wondering why teacher Xuan was coming so early in the morning when four people stepped in from outside—one of them being Ju Zi.

A tall and burly youth stood in front of the group. He was at least two meters tall, and his muscular body rivaled that of He Caitou. Even his skin was dark and tanned—darker skin was an aristocratic sign within the Sun Moon Empire. This muscular youth's hair was brown and short, his eyes sparkled with vitality, and his bulging muscles stretched his uniform tightly.

A tiny girl with a small figure stood behind him. She wasn't as beautiful as Ju Zi, but she had a cute charm, and was only about one hundred and sixty centimeters tall. Her eyes were full of life and ferocity, and even contained a tinge of intimidation. The third person was male, and he had a tall and slim figure. He was a little taller than Huo Yuhao, had long flowing golden hair reached past his shoulders, his nose was high and sharp, his blue eyes were deep yet lively, and his handsome features were complementary with Ju Zi's behind him.

Huo Yuhao immediately stopped what he was doing when they walked in and he said respectfully, "Nice to see you again, senior sister Ju Zi. You guys must be my senior brothers and sisters. Nice to meet everyone—my name is Huo Yuhao, and I'm a new exchange student."

He barely finished his sentence when the tiny girl's shrill voice rang out. "Enough with all that formality. We aren't your senior brothers and sisters—did we let you call us that?"

She walked towards Huo Yuhao as she spoke. Her hands planted on her waist, carrying a truculent and overbearing demeanor.

Huo Yuhao smiled and said, "Then how should I address you?"

"Uh..." The tiny girl was stunned momentarily, and her fierce mannerisms fell apart instantly. "Let's not talk about that first. Who allowed you into the lab?"

"Teacher Xuan, of course." Huo Yuhao replied, amused.

The tiny girl grunted and said, "We haven't agreed to that. This is a shared study area. Follow me outside for a while, I want to ask you something." She pointed towards the door as she spoke.

"Why?" Huo Yuhao asked doubtfully.

The tiny girl said, "Come out and you'll know." She took the lead and headed outside as she spoke

Huo Yuhao didn't know what she was going to do, but, judging from her attitude, it probably wasn't anything good. However, he didn't want to antagonize his senior brothers and sisters in his first few days here, so he followed the tiny girl outside. The other three gazed at him expressionlessly—it was clear that they were ostracizing him.

The tiny girl walked out of the lab and pointed towards a wall by the corridor. "Stand over there."

Huo Yuhao followed her instructions and asked, "What do you want to say to me?"

The tiny girl grunted coldly and replied, "I want to tell you that you aren't worthy enough to enter the lab without our permission. Next time you do, we'll beat you up. Do you understand?"

Huo Yuhao's brows creased. He wanted to say something, but the young girl swiftly took a step back and into the laboratory and shut the door behind her.

“You...” Huo Yuhao possessed impressive self-restraint and composure, but he couldn’t help but feel a indignant. He hurriedly stepped forward to use the access card hanging at his chest to swipe at the door, while he prepared to reason with them inside.

Chapter 159: Xenophobia, Bullying, and the Sovereign Descends

Huo Yuhao’s expression grew solemn and gloomy. His eyes narrowed into slits, and a cold light flickered through them.

I just want to learn here, yet you guys just had to force my hand. Huo Yuhao knew that the best thing for him to do would be to find Xuan Ziwen and let his teacher resolve his predicament. However, he knew that doing so would mean lowering his head to the four of them; a moment of timidity and cowardice like that would probably lead to even more bullying in the future. How could he focus on studying if that happened?

He heaved a sigh and mumbled exasperatedly under his breath, “You guys forced me.” He raised his right hand once he’d finished speaking and pressed it to the lab door. A pale golden radiance flickered in his eyes and one white, one purple, and one black soul ring—quite the peculiar combination—gradually rose from his body. This was the true color of his Spirit Eyes’ soul rings, but whether or not others would believe what this was a different story. After all, not many people believed that the colors of one’s soul rings could be changed at will.

Xuan Ziwen had asked Huo Yuhao if he could use his Spiritual Detection to probe into metallic objects, to which Huo Yuhao had answered that he could, but only to a certain extent. This was a huge breakthrough he’d achieved in his two years of cultivating Spiritual Detection, and he’d come up with a name for it: Focus.

He could focus his energy on a single point to increase its penetrative power and analytical abilities to a truly formidable level. Huo Yuhao’s target of choice was naturally the lab’s access control soul tool.

His gaze quickly concentrated on a single point. He raised his right hand that he’d just pressed against the door and pointed his index finger at a certain spot. Dark golden light sparkled the next moment, and a sharp blade extended from his fingertip and pierced into the alloy door.

One had to admit that the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy didn’t skimp with the mechanisms they used to protect their laboratories. The door was at least half a foot thick, and was incredibly tough. Huo Yuhao had the ability to break it down, but it would consume too much of his soul power to do so. He had several things he needed to do after this, thus he didn’t want to expend too much energy.

It wasn’t easy for his Darkgolden Terrorclaw to drill through such a tough alloy. His Darkgolden Terrorclaw released an ear-piercing sound as it ground through it, and was accompanied by intermittent sparks. However, he was gradually making progress thanks to the Terrorclaw’s extraordinary sharpness.

He drilled about two inches in before violently jabbing his finger inwards, causing the access control soul tool to instantly explode in a shower of sparks. Huo Yuhao immediately withdrew his Darkgolden Terrorclaw when this happened, and the door opened before him.

The best method to open a door guarded with a soul tool was to destroy the soul tool guarding it. It hadn't been too difficult for him to find the crucial formation arrays.

"Beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep...!" the sound of an alarm rang out. The four inside of the lab all turned to stare at him with dumbfounded expressions on their faces. Not even in their wildest dreams had they expected Huo Yuhao to break down the door; they'd never even suspected that he had the ability to do so.

The shrill alarm continued to ring, but Huo Yuhao pretended to not hear anything and stepped into the laboratory. He didn't even look at the four of them as he sauntered towards the place that he'd just been cleaning previously.

"Stop right there!" the young girl exclaimed in both fury and shock. "You dare to damage our lab! Have you already forgotten what we just told you? 'If we see you inside one more time, we'll beat you up again!'"

Huo Yuhao stopped in his tracks and gradually turned around. His expression was full of regret and pity as he said, "I gave you guys one last chance after opening the door. Since you have refused to take it, then I'm sorry. I suspect you guys are intruders, and Ju Zi is your accomplice on the inside. I will take all of you down and hand you guys over to teacher Xuan."

"Where did this little bastard come from? Who do you think you are? Don't you think you're punching above your weight? Take us down? You?" the tall youth that stood in front of everyone exclaimed indifferently. Ju Zi was also indignant, and only the relatively good-looking youth revealed an expression of astonishment, but didn't react much.

He had already decided what he was going to do once he broke down the lab door. He wanted to give these fellows a show of strength, did they really think he was that easily bullied?

Golden light flashed from his eyes, and one white, one purple, and one black soul ring appeared on his body.

The four of them were slightly taken aback when they saw his soul rings. Three rings wasn't much in their eyes, but the colors of Huo Yuhao's three soul rings were simply too peculiar.

Just as they were momentarily off-put, Huo Yuhao's first and third soul rings lit up at the same time.

Huo Yuhao's pupils immediately turned white, and a circle of white light subsequently expanded from his body. The lab's entire atmosphere twisted and contorted. When Ju Zi and the others looked at him again, they felt as if everything around them had turned blurry and obscure.

Even though Ju Zi and the others weren't inside the Illustrious Virtue Hall, they were the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's sixth year students, and they could be considered the elites of their batch. How could they just sit back and let Huo Yuhao attack them?

Ju Zi's reaction was the fastest. Uncountable oranges lunged towards Huo Yuhao's slightly contorting figure, while the handsome youth beside her raised both hands and hurled out six hexagon-shaped golden boxes. A golden light screen wrapped around them and protected them inside itself, right before Huo Yuhao's circle of white radiance hit them.

The four of them unleashed their martial souls at the same time, as powerful soul tools required sufficient soul power to maximize their effects. A giant cannon that was disproportionate to her body size suddenly appeared on the tiny young girl's shoulder. This cannon barrel was even larger than He Caitou's Giant Lightning Cannon, and it looked quite heavy. The tall youth flipped out more than fifty strange soul cannons of all kinds. Even though it wasn't a soul tool fortress, he moved incredibly fast, and the number of soul cannons he was already displaying outmatched most soul tool fortresses.

It was a pity that they still underestimated Huo Yuhao's abilities. The white circle of light effortlessly passed right through the layer of golden light, not impeded at all, and struck the four of them, just like that.

Their eyes immediately turned white, and an intense weakness coursed over their bodies. Their subsequent movements seemed to be slower than usual as dizziness, weakness in their legs, and fatigue caused them to stumble around. This was especially so for the young girl with the enormous cannon, who almost lost her balance.

It was right at this moment that Huo Yuhao suddenly vanished right in front of them, disappearing into the flurry of oranges that were still in midair.

Huo Yuhao had been tricked before, so he wouldn't fall into the same trap again in the face of a similar attack. He was almost sliding across the ground when he slipped out, and he grabbed at the air above him again and again while he was sliding. He seized six actual oranges in the blink of an eye, and hurled them towards the golden layer of light.

Food-type soul masters were the most adept at materializing soul power, the food items that they produced were real, and actually had special effects.

Oranges contained moisture inside them, and he had now transformed them into solid ice. What could six oranges do against a Class 5 soul barrier?

Huo Yuhao gave them the answer.

These four students from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy were outstanding enough. Even though they were struck by Huo Yuhao's Mass Enfeeblement and their minds were under the influence of Spiritual Interference, they still managed to unleash their respective attacks. The handsome youth stepped forward and stood in front of Ju Zi as a pristine white light barrier rose from his body. He raised his right arm at the same time, and a fiery-red longsword instantly appeared in his hands.

Strength and burliness was not a characteristic of long-range soul masters. He was tall and lanky, yet he was a close-combat soul master. The close-combat soul tool in his hands was also clearly a special item.

The tall youth's body erupted with soul rays and soul cannon shells, his judgement extremely accurate for his currently weakened state. He blanked the area Huo Yuhao was moving into and through with ranged fire. It was unfortunate for him that his mind was far too hampered by Spiritual Interference, and adding in Huo Yuhao's accurate judgments via Spiritual Detection, Huo Yuhao simply shifted his position subtly as he surged past this shower of attacks.

The tiny young girl only stabilized herself at this moment, but she hesitated in firing her giant cannon. If she fired this giant cannon inside the laboratory, the cost would be... Just as she hesitated, Huo Yuhao

arrived before the light barrier. This was a lab after all, and not some competition arena – the distance between both parties was not even ten meters before this!

“Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom!” Six vigorous explosions could be heard on the golden light barrier. The things that detonated were the six oranges that Huo Yuhao had tossed out before this – Ice Explosion!

However, it didn’t look like that from their perspective. The tiny young girl reacted in shock and fury as she shouted, “What are you doing, Ju Zi?!”

An enormous crack appeared on the golden light barrier after this series of explosions, and Huo Yuhao’s hands slammed ferociously against the light barrier in the next moment.

Fearsome energy spewed from his body like crashing mountains and tidal waves. Diamond ice crystals covered his large palms, and a faint green luster was shining from them. The golden light barrier wasn’t able to resist for even a single second, it was blown to smithereens under his hands with a string of shrill breaking sounds.

He used the Ghost Shadow Perplexing Track, and his figure appeared even more surreal and virtual under the incredible masking effects of his Spiritual Interference. He was beside the tiny young girl in a flash, and used the Controlling Crane Capturing Dragon technique to pull her in front of him... and directly into the path of the tall youth’s soul tool onslaught.

There were two main types of soul barriers in a soul engineer’s defensive arsenal – one was soul rays and shells that were similar to soul power attacks, and the other was soul barriers that could defend against physical attacks. Both could be used at the same time, but soul engineers would typically only choose one when they were engaged in battle. In the end, it was rare for soul engineers to use physical attacks; this was the case even for close-combat soul engineers.

The golden light barrier released by the handsome youth was meant to defend against physical attacks. This tiny young girl didn’t have the same accurate judgment, and this took Huo Yuhao by surprise, so his large hands immediately clamped onto her neck.

Everything happened far too quickly. The time needed for two breaths was all it took for Huo Yuhao to make a move to the point when he closed his fingers around the girl’s neck. Both parties had tremendously quick reactions, but it was undoubtedly Huo Yuhao who came out on top.

The tiny young girl was unexpectedly strong. She was still struggling and twisting her neck in resistance to Huo Yuhao’s Ice Empress’ Pincer while she pushed backwards with her hands and her right leg sprung out at the same time to kick Huo Yuhao’s vital points.

Unfortunately, it was to no avail. The soul barrier on her body blocked off the tall youth’s soul tool barrage, but that was it – she felt an intense chill on her neck before a wave of numbness came over her body, and she collapsed onto the ground like a ragdoll.

Purplish-golden light immediately erupted from Huo Yuhao’s eyes. He hated it when people dragged in his mother when they were insulting him, and the “little bastard” that the tall youth had just called him was one of the main reasons why he was infuriated and immediately launched an assault. Therefore, this formidable Purple Demon Eyes’ Spiritual Shock was naturally intended for that tall and lanky youth.

The most frightening feature of spirit-type attacks was that the defensive barriers previously mentioned were entirely useless against them, and those struck by such an attack could only use their own spiritual power to protect themselves.

These four students from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy were five-ringed Soul kings, but their spiritual power absolutely paled in comparison to Huo Yuhao's.

Blood gushed from the tall youth's mouth, nose, eyes and ears as he grunted and crashed onto the ground. His eyes rolled back into his head, and he fainted straightaway.

Huo Yuhao's movements didn't stop because of this. His right hand flickered with dark golden light and he sliced directly towards the handsome youth. This was because the handsome youth's sharp sword stabbed at him just as he unleashed his Spiritual Shock.

The handsome youth's hands were as stable as ever even under the effects of Huo Yuhao's Mass Enfeeblement. He stabbed out with his sword and projected three sword shadows into the air. They were like three blooming roses as they covered all of Huo Yuhao's vital points.

Huo Yuhao made the right judgment in this split-second that he was inferior to his opponent in terms of close-combat techniques. However, this didn't mean that his opponent's close-combat strength was more powerful than his – therefore, he gave the handsome youth a complete Darkgolden Terrorclaw.

An enormous dark golden blade slashed down from the sky and crashed against the soul barrier that the handsome youth quickly released. The Class 5 soul barrier instantly crumbled, and the "roses" he had formed were the next to break apart.

Huo Yuhao punched out with his left fist after he slashed out with his right hand. His right foot took a step forward, and Huo Yuhao punched forward simply without any special effects. However, this punch wasn't simple at all in this handsome youth's eyes.

It felt as if all of Huo Yuhao's spiritual power was concentrated onto this fist. In the handsome youth's eyes, this fist was all that was left of Huo Yuhao – a fist that sparkled with diamond brilliance.

A golden shield appeared in the handsome youth's hands. He held the shield up with both hands and infused his Soul King-level soul power inside. Dense soul power rippled, and the shield erupted with golden luster.

"I cannot possibly lose this!" The handsome youth could no longer maintain his composure. Two yellow and three purple soul rings sparkled on his body. However, the peculiar three ring combination had already disappeared from Huo Yuhao's body.

"Boom –"

Huo Yuhao's fist connected with the shield, and what the handsome youth felt in that moment could only be described as wretched and shattering.

He felt as if his shield wasn't the only thing that was being destroyed. His mind was breaking apart at the same time as a defenseless sensation burst from the bottom of his heart, and he felt as if his entire world was being torn apart.

He puked out a stream of blood. The handsome youth followed in the tall youth's footsteps, and collapsed onto the ground. Blood trickled from his nostrils like miniature snakes, but the shield in his hands didn't actually break apart.

Huo Yuhao's eyes erupted with golden radiance, and he turned towards his last remaining adversary – Ju Zi. At this point, her eyes were a little lackadaisical, and her face was completely pale.

“What are you doing?!” An astonished voice could be heard right at this moment, and a figure appeared in the lab with a flash and stood in front of Ju Zi. The golden radiance in Huo Yuhao's eyes vanished at the almost the same time, and his previous frightening aura, as if he reigned supreme over the entire world, also receded.

Supreme Reign! Yes, this was Supreme Reign. This was the name of his ability, and it was invented by the Ultimate Douluo, Elder Mu. It was a terrifying ability that combined both physical and spiritual attacks, and Huo Yuhao was the only person in the entire world who had inherited this ability.

Supreme Reign wasn't a soul skill – it was more, and it could be used with any soul skill. However, it could only be used to infuse spiritual power into physical attacks. In other words, this ability's foundations were still in physical attacks. Huo Yuhao could inject his formidable spiritual power into his physical attacks, but he couldn't flip the process around. In the end, the creator of Supreme Reign wasn't a spirit-type soul master.

Elder Mu had commented to Huo Yuhao before that if he could find out how to reverse the process, then he would have succeeded in life.

Of course, this was still quite a distance away from Huo Yuhao's current standard. There were just too many things that he had to learn, and even though the Ultimate Soldier Plan was starting to bear fruit, the path ahead of him was still extremely long.

Xuan Ziwen was overcome with a haze of terror as he stood before Ju Zi, who was ghastly pale at this point. He would have taken another fifteen minutes to reach the lab, but he was alarmed by the security sirens. He had remote control over his door's access control soul tool, so he was as bewildered as could be when he realized that the incident was coming from his own lab, and he came as fast as he could.

Xuan Ziwen was flabbergasted as he watched his three students unconscious on the ground. Huo Yuhao had mentioned to him before on the first day that they met each other that he was confident of perishing together with him within a fixed distance. He didn't pay much attention to that then, but how could he not be shaken to his very roots by the scene before him now?

These four students had been his personal students ever since they had entered Year 6, including Ju Zi. He was naturally acutely aware of his students' abilities – they were all Soul Kings and Class 5 soul engineers, and were considered the best of the best amongst their batch. Yet, Huo Yuhao didn't even have his fourth soul ring, and three of them were actually defeated. He had no doubt that Ju Zi would also hit the deck if he had arrived just a second later.

“This child is so fearsome and outrageously powerful at such a young age? No wonder...”

Xuan Ziwen had perused his files and records since the first day he met Huo Yuhao, especially his experience during the Continental Advanced Academy Soul Dueling Tournament.

His files detailed Huo Yuhao's performance during several key battles, and it was remarked that he had been mentored by the Dragon God Douluo, Mu En, before his passing. He was one of the absolute elites amongst the younger batch of students from Shrek, and he was definitely in line to participate in the next season's Continental Advanced Academy Soul Dueling Tournament.

Xuan Ziwen didn't have much of an impression after browsing through his records. He could see that Huo Yuhao's records mentioned that he had twin martial souls, but the records mentioned that Yuhao's soul power rank was only a little more than twenty during the competition, and he only had two soul rings. Even though nobody knew his soul rings' exact level, his files had clear records of his abilities. One of the more salient ones featured his martial soul fusion skill with Wang Dong, and Xuan Ziwen was more interested in the fact that the two of them could use martial soul fusion skills rather than in Huo Yuhao's personal battle prowess, and so he paid less attention to the latter.

Xuan Ziwen suddenly realized that he was wrong. Huo Yuhao's personal battle prowess was weak...? Then, what's the deal with these three guys lying on the ground?

Huo Yuhao crushed three Class 5 soul engineers even without his fourth soul ring, and the last one wasn't even fit to continue the battle. This caused Xuan Ziwen to lose all his faith and confidence in his previous experiences.

"Teacher Xuan, these guys hacked the access control and barged into the lab. I was afraid they were intruders, so I made the first move, and I was going to take them down and hand them over to you. Ju Zi brought them here, and I suspect they are accomplices in this act. Please take care of this." Huo Yuhao spoke as if he were recounting the truth. His face of sincerity was totally disproportionate to the ferocious aura that he had emanated during the battle before this.

Ju Zi had recovered by now. Her face was still as pale as ever and she exclaimed, "Nonsense! You intentionally attacked us!"

Huo Yuhao shrugged and replied, "If you guys hadn't hacked the access control, and if you guys hadn't insulted me, why would I treat you like intruders? Did I say something wrong? Teacher Xuan, you can inspect the access control soul tool. They deceived me after barging into the lab to step out, and they hacked it afterwards. I had to force my way in to ensure the lab's safety, so that I could take them down. They have only lost their autonomy and ability to move, and some are slightly injured. It's not a big deal."

Xuan Ziwen was immersed in soul tool research, but he wasn't a fool. He could tell from Huo Yuhao's description that Ju Zi and the others had bullied Huo Yuhao, who was new to this place. Huo Yuhao was infuriated, and found an excuse to retaliate.

The process wasn't that important – what was more substantial was that the four of them fell before Huo Yuhao one after another, and Huo Yuhao was just standing there without even a speck of dirt on his body.

Could he have some special soul tool on him? Xuan Ziwen was a little suspicious.

Many academy guards had arrived by this time. Xuan Ziwen shot a glare at Huo Yuhao and walked out of the laboratory. He explained what had happened to the guards, telling them that something went wrong with his students' experiments in the lab, and it had already been resolved.

Experimenting with soul tools was bound to give rise to all sorts of problems. The guards naturally knew that Xuan Ziwen was a reputable researcher from the Illustrious Virtue Hall, so they didn't suspect the truth of his words and departed immediately afterward. Xuan Ziwen tinkered with the access control soul tool, and returned it to normal.

Ju Zi stared at Huo Yuhao and wanted to say something threatening, but nothing came out of her mouth. It was clear that this kid, who was actually younger than she was, had instilled a deep sense of fear in her.

She had brought three classmates back with her today to seek vengeance for what had happened the day before, when she was frozen by the Domain of Perpetual Ice. Even though she had recovered, she was shivering for pretty much the entire day afterwards, and it wasn't that easy to recuperate. She was instantly infuriated when she thought about Huo Yuhao watching her secretly and even attacking her. She waited for her classmates to return before she recounted the episode, and everyone came to an easy consensus. They all agreed to show Huo Yuhao, this new student who had just arrived, who was boss around here.

However, never in Ju Zi's dreams had she expected Huo Yuhao to overwhelm their combined strength. Even though the laboratory wasn't big, and no one went all-out, Huo Yuhao's movements were just too quick. He never gave them a chance to show their best, and then the battle was over. If teacher Xuan hadn't arrived in the nick of time, she would probably have been struck down as well.

How did he do that? He didn't use any soul tools, he was just relying on his power as a soul master.

Ju Zi had always been one of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's elites, and she was confident of passing the Illustrious Virtue Hall's entry examination. Her research with soul tools had gone so deep that she was beginning to doubt the abilities of a soul master. From her perspective, a soul master of the same class would never be able to outmatch a soul engineer from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy like her.

But today, Huo Yuhao had completely turned her opinions around. Even though she wasn't convinced, she couldn't help but feel a sense of defeat and self-deprecation whenever she thought about Huo Yuhao's three soul rings lighting up at the same time.

Huo Yuhao continued to act as if nothing had happened, and went back to cleaning the place up, especially the oranges that littered the ground.

Xuan Ziwen closed the lab door with a strange expression on his face and walked back to everyone. He checked the three collapsed students on the ground to make sure they were okay, but suddenly realized that he had a problem on his hands.

Huo Yuhao made it seem like it wasn't a big deal, and that their lives weren't in danger, but it wasn't as simple as losing their fighting strength!

The only person that was in relatively good shape was the tiny young girl. Only her central nervous system had been frozen by Huo Yuhao's Ultimate Ice, and she ended up like Ju Zi on the first day, who had recovered after shivering for an entire day. The other two's circumstances were a lot less optimistic.

The tall youth took a hit from Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Shock. Even though Huo Yuhao had limited his spiritual power, he gave his opponent a solid and ferocious hit in return for the humiliation. The powerful Spiritual Shock had caused the tall youth's spiritual sea to disassemble and come apart. He was now in a coma, and he definitely wouldn't wake up for a while. It was hard to say whether he would experience any sequelae when he woke up.

The handsome youth was in a slightly better situation. He had suffered a traumatic injury that Xuan Ziwen couldn't identify, and there seemed to be some remnants of power left inside his body that were still wreaking havoc. It wasn't that fierce, but Xuan Ziwen was an eight-ringed Soul Douluo, and even he couldn't resolve it with all his power.

"Come here, Yuhao," Xuan Ziwen waved towards Huo Yuhao.

"Yes?" Huo Yuhao walked over immediately.

Xuan Ziwen glanced at him with an inscrutable expression. He lowered his voice and said, "The three of them are my students. I know that you must have received some injustice, but you have wounded them in return, so let's call it even. What do you think?"

It was Huo Yuhao's turn to be shocked. He had originally expected Xuan Ziwen to chide or punish him, and he was mentally prepared for that eventuality. However, he didn't expect teacher Xuan to resolve the issue so casually.

"I will listen to you." Huo Yuhao answered like an obedient child.

Ju Zi watched from the side with a look of annoyance. She thought to herself, You little bastard, acting like an obedient and gentle little child in front of teacher Xuan. You were so fierce just a moment ago.

Xuan Ziwen continued, "You're an exchange student, and you will be studying with us for two years. No matter what, they are still your seniors, and the academy prohibits fighting inside the laboratories. We'll let this go, and I hope there won't be a next time. Of course, I will control and restrict them. If they trouble you again, I will punish them according to the academy's rules. However, you have to help me heal them, as I don't wish for anything bad to happen to my students. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?"

"I understand." Huo Yuhao didn't mince his words, and pointed a finger at the tall youth. "I can't help him, teacher Xuan. I have only had my mother since I was young, but my mother is no longer around, and he called me a little bastard. There is nothing I can do to help him. Find a place to let him rest, and he will recover on his own after about half a month. However, he might experience some spiritual disorientation for a period of time."

He immediately knelt down on the floor afterwards. He pressed down on the back of the tiny girl's neck and withdrew his Ultimate Ice energy, before he walked beside the handsome youth and patted him on the body several times to neutralize the Supreme Reign's mystical effects.

The two of them woke up one after the other. The tiny girl shivered violently, before she suddenly saw Huo Yuhao right next to her. She leapt to her feet and was about to erupt once again until Xuan Ziwen stopped her with a furious exclamation.

"Enough, Ke Ke. If you still want to cause trouble, get out of my sight."

It was only then that the tiny girl, Ke Ke, realized Xuan Ziwen was present. She said with an aggrieved expression, "He's a bully, teacher Xuan! He hit me! You have to get justice for me!" It was obvious that she was better than Ju Zi was at throwing tantrums.

Xuan Ziwen grunted coldly and muttered, "Do you think I don't know who's bullying who? How can you mess around with them, Zi Mu?"

The handsome youth, Zi Mu, had a look of exasperation as he replied, "Don't be angry, teacher Xuan. We were wrong." He didn't push the issue, and Huo Yuhao couldn't help but glance a few more times in his direction.

Xuan Ziwen said, "Wang Shaojie needs more time to rest. Send him back to the dormitory, and I will send a teacher responsible for healing students to see to him soon."

"Yes," Zi Mu acknowledged. He turned towards Huo Yuhao momentarily, and he couldn't help but quiver when his eyes came across this youth for reasons he couldn't explain, as if something in his spirit had been shattered.

Huo Yuhao met Zi Mu's gaze calmly. He was much more familiar with Supreme Reign's effects.

Supreme Reign was a mighty ability that combined physical and spiritual attacks. Once his opponent took a hit from Supreme Reign, their confidence would be crushed as well. His opponent would develop a fear of him, as if there were no way they could resist him the next time they encountered each other.

Zi Mu carried Wang Shaojie away, and Xuan Ziwen turned towards Yuhao with an exasperated look. "Ah, Yuhao. This is a little problematic. Wang Shaojie belongs to the royal family. Even though he's not a direct member, he belongs to an aristocratic family that has been added to the royal family's register. The academy needs to answer to them now that you have wounded him."

Huo Yuhao lowered his head and said, "Everything is up to you, teacher Xuan." He was ready to give and ready to take, and he knew he couldn't be overly tough and stubborn if he wanted to continue studying at the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. He was positive that teacher Xuan could do something about this with his status within the academy.

Indeed, Xuan Ziwen frowned and said, "Alright, that's enough. Let me handle this. You can stay in the lab and clean everything up. Nobody will cause trouble for you again. If not, don't blame me for not giving you another chance." With that, he hurried away. Even though Huo Yuhao refused to help Wang Shaojie, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's medicinal prowess was relatively formidable, and it wouldn't be hard for him to find someone to heal Wang Shaojie. This infighting would quickly be resolved as long as he was okay.

The laboratory door closed once again, and only Huo Yuhao, Ju Zi, and Ke Ke were left inside.

Huo Yuhao didn't say anything else, and continued cleaning up the lab. Ke Ke and Ju Zi were extremely close and intimate, and they knew what the other was thinking the moment their gazes met. Ke Ke's red lips shifted up and down, and she mouthed to Ju Zi, "This fellow is so powerful! Even four of us can't take him down?!"

Ju Zi was a little unconvinced. "That's because we're inside the lab. If we were outside, and if we were given enough space, he would have no chance at all." She didn't suppress her voice, and intentionally said everything out loud.

Huo Yuhao pretended as if he hadn't heard anything, and kept at what he was doing.

Ke Ke chimed in and harmonized with Ju Zi. "He's a soul master. He has an advantage at close-range, but he doesn't have a chance at a distance. We shall see when we're on our expeditions, heh!"

Huo Yuhao suddenly straightened his back and stared at Ke Ke.

Ke Ke was taken by surprise and raised her hands to protect herself. She stammered nervously, "What are you doing?"

A mocking smile appeared on Huo Yuhao's face. "Strength and ability doesn't come from speech or from the mouth. You might as well spend the time researching or studying soul tools. I can help you if you need guidance or whatnot."

The oranges on the floor had been swept into his storage-type soul tool at this point. He cleaned up the lab every single day, and it was spick and span in the blink of an eye.

He found a spot to sit down after completing his task, and quietly contemplated some questions for his teacher he had had regarding soul tools while he waited for Xuan Ziwen to come back.

Chapter 160: Enlightenment

Ke Ke was still infuriated, and made a few hand gestures at Ju Zi. Ju Zi shook her head and said, "Forget it. Don't bother with him. Didn't you say that he was an orphan?"

Ke Ke stuck her tongue out and said, "You're the one with compassion. I'm the one who got whacked."

Ju Zi laughed and replied, "He didn't whack you! He only touched you. Come to think of it, Zimu was the only one who got hit. Even Wang Shaojie only got glared at. I wonder how he started bleeding and fainted."

The two of them were feeling better now. They were also a little stunned as they recalled Huo Yuhao's performance just now. Huo Yuhao's abilities had left a deep impression on them.

"Oi!" Ju Zi called out to Huo Yuhao.

"My name is Huo Yuhao, not 'oi.'" Huo Yuhao turned around, annoyed. He couldn't focus on his thinking as the two of them stared at him. Furthermore, it seemed like Teacher Xuan wouldn't be back in time for lessons. He was prepared to return to the dormitory to cultivate.

"Alright, Huo Yuhao. What's your martial soul? Are the claws that you used just now your soul tool? What class is it? Zimu's Class 5 soul tool barrier couldn't even block it. That's not normal!"

Huo Yuhao smiled and said, "It's a secret. I'm leaving now." As he spoke, he started to walk out.

"You're not allowed to leave before answering me!" Ke Ke moved in front of him.

Huo Yuhao didn't care, and continued to move forward. He said, "What? You want to get frozen again?"

Ke Ke didn't dare to clash head-on with him, and seeing that they were about to knock into each other, she dodged to one side unwillingly. Huo Yuhao opened the laboratory door and walked out just like that.

"Idiot!" Ke Ke slapped a table hard and said angrily, "This fellow is too unreasonable. Hmph!"

"Forget it," Ju Zi snapped at her, "He's an orphan. Anyway, we're the ones who provoked him first."

"Hey! Ju Zi, how can you side with him? Are you into him because his abilities are great? It seems like he's not even our age!"

"Pooh, pooh, pooh!" Ju Zi snapped, "Did you forget what my goal is? I swear that I'll marry the best chef on the continent. That's the only way my insatiable appetite can be satisfied."

Ke Ke laughed and answered, "Your goal has tortured Zimu. He had the ability to enter the Illustrious Virtue Hall last year, but he delayed it for you. He even allocates some time every day to learn cooking. Honestly speaking, he treats you quite well. Why're you so stubborn?"

Ju Zi rolled her eyes and said, "Forget it, I don't want to find a guy who I have no sense of security with. I'm not into handsome guys! I'm not as obsessed as you. You can have him if you want."

Embarrassed, Ke Ke retorted, "You're the one who's obsessed! See if I spare you!" As she spoke, she leapt towards Ju Zi. Their conflict with Huo Yuhao seemed to have been forgotten. Women's hearts were really unfathomable!

.....

Huo Yuhao's lifestyle back in the dormitory was simple, yet fulfilling. He engaged in meditation, thinking, cultivation, and sketching. Besides the short amount of time he allocated to eating, Huo Yuhao did all of these things in his room. It was only when He Caitou came to find him at night that they shared their findings over the past few days. That was the only time that he stopped cultivation.

"Bang, bang, bang!" the room's door sounded.

Huo Yuhao and He Caitou looked at each other. Who was here so late? The sky was already completely dark, and the lights in the dorms were about to go out for the night.

Huo Yuhao opened the door. Xuan Ziwen was standing outside.

He looked ghastly. He didn't enter the room, and only said from the hallway, "Yuhao, Wang Shaojie's condition is not very good. Will he really recover in half a month's time?"

It seemed like the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy had healing-type soul tools apart from healing-type soul masters. However, one's mind and Spiritual Sea had always been forbidden ground. Soul masters and soul engineers were both limited in their research on Spiritual Seas. After all, it was too dangerous to venture into such an aspect, since it might lead to permanent impairment.

Wang Shaojie's mind had suffered from a powerful shock. Although he was a five-ringed soul king, most of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy students relied on medicine and some soul tools to increase their cultivation when they were young. Just like Shrek Academy's soul engineers couldn't compare to the Sun Moon Empire, the Sun Moon Empire's soul engineers were inferior to true soul masters in terms of defenses. Wang Shaojie's spiritual power wasn't strong, and he was critically injured

after suffering from Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Shock. The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's healing-type soul masters didn't dare to use invasive methods to heal him. They could only let him recuperate on his own, like what Huo Yuhao had suggested.

Huo Yuhao nodded and replied, "I held back. It won't harm his life. He just needs a while to rest. After one's mind suffers from shock, it's best to recuperate on one's own. External help may be counter-effective."

Xuan Ziwen nodded his head and said, "That's good. But..." as he spoke to that point, he became a little hesitant.

Huo Yuhao was puzzled as he asked, "Teacher Xuan, 'but' what?"

Xuan Ziwen sighed and said, "Wang Shaojie has some standing in the empire's royal family. Thus, the royal family has already learned of his injury. They want me to hand you over. Even though I tried to keep matters under control, they're still demanding that you be handed over. I'm afraid you'll have to suffer for a few days."

Huo Yuhao squinted and asked, "Teacher Xuan, what do you mean?"

Xuan Ziwen said, "Let's put it this way. They didn't test our newly-created soul tool properly the last time. Tomorrow, you shall follow Ju Zi and Ke Ke to test that newly-created soul tool. You'll return in half a month's time. If Wang Shaojie wakes up like you said, the problem should be resolved. Leave things here to me."

Huo Yuhao could sense that Xuan Ziwen was protecting him. He felt a tinge of warmth in his heart, and bowed towards him, "Thank you, Teacher Xuan."

Xuan Ziwen smiled and said, "You're my student. I must be responsible for you. If you really want to thank me, you should invest more effort in the research of soul tools. I'm waiting for you to surprise me more. Alright, it's no longer early. Have an early night. Tomorrow morning, wait for the two of them at the gate of the academy. They will bring you to a suitable testing area."

"Yes."

Xuan Ziwen left, and Huo Yuhao returned to his room. He Caitou was a little worried as he looked at him. He said, "Little junior, should I go with you tomorrow? Is this their scheme? If something happens while you're out..."

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "It's not a scheme. I believe Teacher Xuan. Second senior, you should know that I'm quite sensitive. If Teacher Xuan had been nervous when he was talking to me earlier, I would have been able to sense it immediately. Furthermore, I believe in my own judgment. If the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy wants to deal with me, they can only do so after the exchange is over. After all, Meng Hongchen and Xiao Hongchen are still in Shrek. If something happens to me, will Shrek let them off? Let me follow Teacher Xuan's arrangement. It's also good for me to leave the academy. I can pass on all the sketchings I've made. At the same time, I can take a look at their new soul tool."

He Caitou nodded and said, "But you must still be careful. If you're attacked, don't think too much, and escape. Safety is your first priority."

The two of them looked at each other. They were still exploring, since they had just arrived. Although they had learned some things, they were still very far from the core of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy.

“Second senior, I can sense that Teacher Xuan is under a lot of pressure teaching me. Otherwise, he wouldn’t just be teaching me all the theoretical stuff, and not explaining the practical stuff to me. What about you?”

He Caitou laughed bitterly. “We did talk about practical stuff. But they’re all about Class 8 soul tools, which I can’t understand. I don’t have a memory like you, either. I can only memorize a little, and my sketchings are all incomplete. They’re obviously playing tricks on me. I believe that the rest are also learning the same things.”

Huo Yuhao chortled and said, “That’s normal. If they didn’t do this, I might even have suspected that something was wrong. It’s not early anymore. You should return to rest. I’ll be out for at least half a month this time. I hope that I can learn something.”

He Caitou left, but Huo Yuhao couldn’t enter his meditative state while laying on his bed. His emotions were a little messy.

He had already been in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy for four days. He had learned quite a lot in the past four days. Although he hadn’t encountered anything important yet, the knowledge that he had acquired was definitely more than the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy expected.

However, he didn’t like the feeling here. Compared to the familial warmth that he felt in Shrek Academy, he always had to be on his toes over here. He had to be able to react at any time, and he was wary of everyone around him.

Huo Yuhao missed the time he’d spent cultivating in Shrek Academy. If it were possible, he hoped that the two-and-a-half years would pass quickly, so that he could return to Shrek and reunite with his friends.

When he thought of his friends, he couldn’t help but miss Wang Dong. He didn’t wake Wang Dong up the day that they separated. However, Huo Yuhao could clearly remember the tears in Wang Dong’s eyes. Wang Dong had even muttered his name in his dreams, and begged him not to leave. His voice had even seemed to...

Huo Yuhao’s heart was a mess when he reached this point. Wang Dong’s figure and the ravishing beauty formed from the Rainment of Light’s transformation appeared in his mind.

These messy thoughts made him filled with yearning for Shrek Academy. Was eldest senior fine? Did he find Teacher Xiao Ya yet? How was the relationship between third and fourth seniors? Fifth senior Xiao Xiao had also seemed a little different before he left with second senior. As for Wang Dong, he’d discover the truth about him when he returned.

The next morning.

A refreshingly chilly, light mist filled the air.

Huo Yuhao had changed his attire; his current ordinary attire made him seem like an ordinary kid.

The sun had already risen halfway in the east. He'd also finished cultivating his Purple Demon Eyes. He'd made the quickest progress in the Purple Demon Eyes among all of the Tang Sect's Secret Techniques.

There were four different levels of the Purple Demon Eyes: Surveyance, Totality, Mustard Seed, and Boundlessness.

He was already at the third level, Mustard Seed. He'd managed to reach this level using his Spiritual Detection to research the ability to focus. He was also the first to reach the Mustard Seed level among everyone in the Tang Sect.

Even Shrek Academy's senior management didn't know that Huo Yuhao's greatest offensive strength didn't lie in his Ultimate Ice or Darkgolden Terrorclaw. Rather, it was his immense spiritual power that could be used through the combination of his Purple Demon Eyes and Spiritual Shock. His irresistible spiritual power was the reason why he could fight beyond his level.

In the distance, two graceful-looking figures drifted into view. They were walking very quickly, and reached Huo Yuhao quite quickly.

Ju Zi had changed into a white dress, which accentuated her figure. Her silky-white skin looked much brighter, as it was complemented by her white attire.

Ke Ke was dressed in green, and looked very neat. Although her figure wasn't as good as Ju Zi's, it was still very proportionate, her dress making her look more vibrant.

The two of them weren't kind when they saw Huo Yuhao. Ke Ke placed her hands on her waist and said, "It's all your fault that we have to go out again. Teacher Xuan said that you have to listen to the both of us when we're out. If you dare to try anything, the academy will expel you and immediately send you back to Shrek Academy!"

Huo Yuhao was a little annoyed, thus he shrugged his shoulders. He simply gestured for them to advance, but didn't say anything.

Ju Zi glanced at him and said, "Let's go. We're heading to the Jing Yang Mountain Range. There are many soul beasts there. We should forget our conflict back in the academy and work together on this journey. You're the only male here, thus you should protect us well."

Huo Yuhao was a little stunned as he looked at Ju Zi. He hadn't expected her temperament to change so much. He nodded and said, "Okay."

Ke Ke was annoyed after hearing Huo Yuhao's short reply and said, "Hey, you're taking this attitude even though Sister Ju Zi is being so nice to you?"

Huo Yuhao laughed bitterly. "Am I supposed to be grateful? The two of you were bullying me just yesterday."

Ke Ke glare grew even wider. It was as if she'd just heard something ridiculous. "We bullied you? Wang Shaojie is still unconscious, while Zimu's injury is still quite serious. Who bullied who?"

Huo Yuhao answered, "I was just defending myself. Could you take it if someone calls you a bastard?"

Ke Ke wanted to say more, but was stopped by Ju Zi, "Alright, let's go. Huo Yuhao, Teacher Xuan indeed said that I'm the leader for this trip. Don't worry, I won't take revenge on you for what happened earlier. It's one thing to have conflicts in the academy, but even though you're an exchange student, you're still part of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. You're even leaving the academy to experiment on soul tools on its behalf. Let's go."

Once she'd finished speaking, she forced Ke Ke to walk in front. Ke Ke turned to look at Huo Yuhao. "Can you use a flying-type soul tool despite your three rings?" A pair of wings flapped open behind her as she spoke. Her toes pointed upwards, and two blue flames spewed out from her wings, which quickly propelled her into the air.

Ju Zi also turned back to look at Huo Yuhao, asking him the same question with her eyes.

Huo Yuhao didn't speak, but a simple, greyish pair of wings flapped open behind his back. A gentle white light shot out and propelled him into the sky. Even though he wasn't a Class 6 soul engineer in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, he still had a flying-type soul tool with him.

Ju Zi's flying-type soul tool was orangish-red; she seemed to love this color. Three pairs of wings flapped in the air and headed towards the south.

At this point, the difference in their soul tools was revealed. Ju Zi and Ke Ke seemed very relaxed as they flew in front. However, they were still very fast. Their wings even released a layer of dim light that formed a film on the surface of their bodies. Even their hair swayed in the wind as they flew.

Huo Yuhao, on the other hand, was lagging behind them. Although he tried his best to propel his self-made Class 5 flying-type soul tool, he couldn't catch up, and thus was still depleting more soul power than the other two, who would slow down to wait for him so that he didn't get separated from the group.

Ke Ke was delighted. Every time they waited for Huo Yuhao, her eyes held a look of disdain and mockery.

Huo Yuhao didn't react to this. He knew how inferior he was in terms of soul tools, and that it wasn't something that he could make up for in such a short period of time. However, he memorized the structures and formation arrays of their soul tools as they flew.

Xuan Ziwen didn't conduct practicals for him, thus he had to find real-life examples to test his theories.

Even now, Huo Yuhao didn't know exactly where the Jing Yang Mountain Range was. He was fine just following the both of them. However, he could make a rough guess from Ju Zi's words. The Jing Yang Mountain Range had many soul beasts. Was this an arrangement that Teacher Xuan had made so that he could get his fourth soul ring? That was highly probable.

After flying for two hours, Huo Yuhao expressed that he needed to rest. Afterwards, he flew downwards, disregarding the other two's opinions. He still had some soul power left, but he wouldn't deplete it all.

He found a suitable place to rest as he descended. Once he landed, he immediately sat cross-legged and entered a meditative state to restore his soul power.

Ju Zi and Ke Ke landed after him.

Ke Ke stuck out her tongue at Huo Yuhao. “Wasn’t he arrogant before? His soul engineer standard is just average. He can’t be arrogant anymore, can he? Sister Ju Zi, you’re right. With enough distance between us, this fellow wouldn’t be our match.”

Ju Zi didn’t say anything, simply watching Huo Yuhao. She appeared to be thinking of something.

She was the only one out of the four yesterday that had seen the entire fight. Huo Yuhao left a deep impression on her—not because of his Darkgolden Terrorclaws, but because of his punch towards Zimu’s soul shield.

Ju Zi had felt as if he was a king capable of ruling the world at that point in time. She’d seen the extremely wise, intelligent and powerful Zimu be unable to even handle his strike, and collapse after just one punch.

She couldn’t forget the golden light in Huo Yuhao’s eyes and his dominant might.

The horrible feeling she’d felt from being frozen by the Domain of Perpetual Ice had been replaced by curiosity. How magical was this young fellow from Shrek Academy?

She was only a student, and didn’t have the authority to investigate Huo Yuhao’s background like Xuan Ziwen. However, she clearly felt that he wasn’t just some random three-ringed soul master. There must be some secret to him. Shrek Academy was indeed mysterious!

“Alright, Ke Ke. We have to stick together since we’re on the same trip. There are bound to be conflicts. If we meet danger and can’t work together, won’t we just be harming ourselves? Let’s take a break too.” Ju Zi pulled Ke Ke and sat down.

They had more soul power than Huo Yuhao, and had depleted less of it too. However, Huo Yuhao’s restoration left both of them shocked. It only took 15 minutes before he opened his eyes, looking refreshed.

Ke Ke was stunned and asked, “Your soul power’s already been restored?” She hadn’t even seen Huo Yuhao using an auxiliary-type soul tool like the Milk Bottle.

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, “We can leave now.”

His soul power increased very slowly even though he’d had the greatest support from Shrek Academy in terms of resources. He’d only managed to reach Rank 40 with Elder Mu’s help before he passed on. His improvement was slow even though he’d had the help of the Haodong Power and worked very hard on his cultivation. However, it wasn’t that simple. His soul power was extremely dense, much more than that of any ordinary soul master’s. More importantly, his endurance in battle and regenerative abilities were greater than most soul masters at the same level as him.

Huo Yuhao estimated that with his current cultivation speed he’d need five more years to reach Rank 50, should everything go smoothly. He would need ten years before he reached Rank 60. As for becoming a Rank 70 soul sage, it would require twenty years. The progression of an Ultimate Element soul master was indeed fraught with difficulties.

However, could his cultivation speed really be appraised as normal? Elder Mu had already helped him find the most suitable path. Although this path was difficult to tread, it was already a shortcut. He even had another shortcut for himself. However, it wasn't the time for him to fully activate his potential yet.

Huo Yuhao wondered whether he could fulfil his true mission here in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. When he thought of this point, a streak of blinding light flashed through his eyes.

Ju Zi managed to capture that light in his eyes, and she discovered that her heart throbbed a little when she saw it. How was it possible for someone his age to have such a look in his eyes? Why did she feel like she was looking at the cold eyes of a huge soul beast?

They flew up once again, but Ju Zi didn't remain at the front with Ke Ke, instead choosing to fly alongside Huo Yuhao.

"Huo Yuhao, the Jing Yang Mountain Range is located in the northern region of the Sun Moon Continent. It's around a thousand miles away, so it'll be another six hours for our flight. The Jing Yang Mountain Range covers a wide expanse, and is engulfed by thick vegetation. There are many valuable resources located there, but there are also many metal-type soul beasts. Even spiritual-type soul beasts have been known to appear, Teacher Xuan asked me to tell you that. He told me to let you use your own judgement. Don't miss the opportunity if a suitable soul beast appears. Ke Ke and I will help you too."

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, "Thanks, senior sister." Ju Zi's kind gesture removed the disdain he held her in previously, and his tone of voice also became much gentler. However, he remained quiet. It was impossible for him to not be wary of them.

Ke Ke twisted her lips beside Ju Zi and didn't make a sound. She didn't hold any less contempt for Huo Yuhao, and she vividly recalled how Huo Yuhao had strangled her. When that happened, she felt as if she was going to die. Her entire body turned numb from the struggle, and she even felt that she would never wake up again.

They flew for another two hours before resting again.

"Let's eat before we continue our journey. With our current speed, we'll reach the Jing Yang Mountain Range before evening." Ju Zi looked at the sky and instructed them to rest.

She was fully prepared for this trip. She brought out a large quantity of food from her storage-type soul tool, which she had since she was a lady who loved to eat. There were vegetables, fruits, frozen meats and even condiments. Needless to say, she was well prepared, she even brought her own kitchen cutlery.

Ju Zi was delighted when she saw Huo Yuhao staring at her in a daze. "I'm going to show off my skills now and let you two taste my outdoor-grilled food. It's definitely delicious. Be careful not to eat your tongue too."

As she spoke, she set up the grill and started a fire to prepare her food.

Huo Yuhao was a little stunned as he watched. He had a weird feeling in his heart, because he was always the one who grilled meat for others. However, it was the reverse now, an entirely new experience for him. He didn't say much, and just watched quietly.

“You’re in luck. Sister Ju Zi’s cooking is the best. Even Zimu and Wang Shaojie rarely get to try it.” After flying for four hours, Ke Ke seemed to have forgotten the conflict between her and Huo Yuhao. Although still as petty as ever, the contempt in her eyes had dissipated.

“Haha.” Huo Yuhao laughed even though he thought it seemed a little silly.

Ke Ke snapped, “What’re you laughing at? Oh right, what type of a soul engineer are you?”

“Type?” Huo Yuhao was a little puzzled as he looked at her.

Ke Ke seemed as if she were looking at a freak and said, “That can’t be right. Don’t tell me that Shrek is so backwards that it doesn’t categorize its soul engineers? Soul masters must tend towards a certain aspect. No soul engineers can excel in all areas, unless you’re a research-type soul engineer like Teacher Xuan, who puts research as his priority, and is not inclined towards any certain aspect. You must be a close-combat type of soul engineer, since your close-combat skills are so honed. However, I haven’t seen you use a close-combat soul tool before.”

Boom——

Huo Yuhao felt the illusion of something that had been confusing him for along time instantly being blown to pieces in his brain. A light appeared in his head.

All this while, he and He Caitou had been cultivating tirelessly because of the Ultimate Soldier Plan. They practically tortured themselves every day. How couldn’t he feel tired? Wasn’t he human too? Even though his memory was shockingly good, and his spiritual power was superior to that of most others, he would still be fatigued when he tried to meditate at night. This was also why his mind became unstable when Elder Mu passed away.

In Shrek Academy, the Soul Tool Department was undergoing rapid development. The Ultimate Soldier Plan’s goal is to nurture an invincible soul master and soul engineer. This was a great motivational plan for Huo Yuhao, but also a great source of mental pressure!

Ke Ke’s words jolted him awake, especially when she mentioned that ‘no soul engineer could excel in all areas’.

Yes! No wonder he felt as though his improvements didn’t match up with that of He Caitou’s even though his soul engineer rank increased. This was the problem!

He Caitou had managed to find his path, which was in the area of stationary soul tools. What about him? Besides stationary soul tools, he learned everything. The immense knowledge that he had been assimilating caused him to become incredibly exhausted.

She was right. He needed to make a choice. To decide on a path suitable for him. If he continued like this, he might be unable to become the Ultimate Soldier. If things went wrong, he might even be overwhelmed in the complex and advanced knowledge of soul tools.

Huo Yuhao felt very free when he figured all this out. He stood up and bowed towards Ke Ke.

“Thank you.”

Ke Ke jumped in shock. "Hey, are you okay? Are you sick in the head? I don't want to train with a mentally-ill person."

Huo Yuhao was in a good mood now. The sense of unhappiness that he'd had earlier disappeared, "I'm fine. I just thought of something that made me happy. You're right. But I'm not a close-combat soul engineer. I'm a war-type soul engineer to a certain degree."

Ke Ke was stunned, "A war-type soul engineer? It's my first time hearing that. What do you mean?"

Huo Yuhao replied, "A war-type soul engineer researches soul tools that exist solely for the purposes of war. Mainly using close-combat and certain long-range soul tools, but it's effects are more for close-range." He wasn't slow-witted. He had been giving his all for the Ultimate Soldier Plan. After he figured out this all-important question, he immediately found his direction. However, he couldn't tell Ke Ke everything. He had chosen close-combat as his main direction. As for long-range attacks, he would need He Caitou to back him up. With their chemistry, the title of a war-type soul engineer should technically belong to the both of them.

Ke Ke said, "Be careful of being overzealous."

Huo Yuhao asked her, "Senior, what path did you choose?"

Ke Ke seemed to be in a better mood after Huo Yuhao called her senior. She proudly said, "I chose to be an explosive medium-range combat-type soul engineer. If I wasn't concerned about ruining the laboratory, do you think you would have won? Otherwise, when I fire a cannon at you, you won't be able to take care of yourself for the rest of your life."

After digesting her words and recalling the huge cannon she'd brought at that time, Huo Yuhao vaguely understood what her direction was.

Huo Yuhao sighed in his heart. Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department didn't make any clear distinctions like this. Soul engineers were classified just like soul masters! He had to pass this news back quickly. His entire trip out here made worthwhile by this discovery.

As he was thinking, a thick aroma wafted over. He and Ke Ke were attracted to it.

"Wow, it's so fragrant." Ke Ke rushed towards Ju Zi. Her eyes brightened up, surprisingly her drooling face looked rather cute.

Ju Zi's grilling technique was indeed amazing. The two pheasants she cooked turned a golden yellow from the grilling.

Huo Yuhao's nose twitched, and he could immediately tell that Ju Zi had used more than ten different types of spices on the grilled pheasants, and he could tell her grilling method was slightly different from his. However, he could ascertain that the taste of the pheasants would be good from its aroma and crispy, golden-yellow appearance.

Ju Zi glanced at Ke Ke and laughed. "They always laugh at me for being a glutton, but you're not much different from me. It's just that you're good at hiding it."

Ke Ke laughed. "I'll put up with anything you say now. Faster! I'm dying of hunger. As long as you feed me right this instant, I'll let you say anything."

Ju Zi glared at her before glancing at Huo Yuhao, who didn't react. She joked, "You're spouting so much nonsense. Are you sure he won't misunderstand you?"